THREE TALES

WILLIAM DOUGLAS O'CONNOR

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By William D. O'Connor

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THREE TALES

THE GHOST
THE BRAZEN ANDROID
THE CARPENTER

BY

WILLIAM DOUGLAS O'CONNOR

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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PREFACE.

A HASTY memorandum, not particularly for Preface to the following tales, but to put on record my respect and affection for as sane, beautiful, cute, tolerant, loving, candid and free and fair-intentioned a nature as ever vivified our race.

In Boston, 1860, I first met William Douglas O'Connor.[1] As I saw and knew him then, in his twenty-ninth year, and for twenty-five further years, he was a gallant, handsome, gay-hearted, fine-voiced, glowing-eyed man; lithe-moving on his feet, of healthy and magnetic

[1] Born January 2, 1832. When grown, lived several years in Boston, and edited journals and magazines there; went about 1861 to Washington, D. C., and became a U. S. clerk, first in the Lighthouse Bureau and then in the U. S. Life-Saving Service, in which branch he was Assistant Superintendent for many years, — sickened in 1887, — died there at Washington, May 9, 1889.

atmosphere and presence, and the most welcome company in the world. He was a thorough-going anti-slavery believer, speaker and writer (doctrinaire), and though I took a fancy to him from the first, I remember I feared his ardent abolitionism, — was afraid it would probably keep us apart. (I was a decided and out-spoken anti-slavery believer myself, then and always; but shied from the extremists, the red-hot fellows of those times.) O'Connor was then correcting the proofs of "Harrington," an eloquent and fiery novel he had written, and which was printed just before the commencement of the Secession War. He was already married, the father of two fine little children, and was personally and intellectually the most attractive man I had ever met. Last of '62 I found myself led towards the war-field — went to Washington City (to become absorbed in the armies, and in the big hospitals, and to get work in one of the Departments) — and there I met and resumed friendship, and found warm hospitality from O'Connor and his New England wife.

On through to '73 I saw and talked with

O'Connor almost daily. I had soon got employment, first for a short time in the Indian Bureau (in the Interior Department), and then for a long while in the Attorney General's office. The Secession War, with its tide of varying fortunes, excitements — President Lincoln and the daily sight of him, the doings in Congress and at the State capitals, the news from the fields and campaigns, and from foreign governments, with a hundred matters, occurrences, personalities — (Greeley, Wendell Phillips, the parties, the Abolitionists, etc.) — were the subjects of our talk and discussion. I am not sure, from what I heard then, but O'Connor was cut out for a first-class orator or public speaker or forensic advocate. No audience or jury could have stood out against him. He had a power and sharp-cut faculty of statement and persuasiveness beyond any man's else. I know it well, for I have felt it many a time. If not as orator, his forte was as critic, newer, deeper than any; also, as literary author. One of his traits was that while he knew all, and welcomed all sorts of great *genre* literature, all lands and times, from all writers and artists, and not only

tolerated each, and defended every attacked literary person with a skill and heart-catholicism that I never saw equaled, — invariably advocated or excused them, — he kept an idiosyncrasy and identity of his own very marked, and without special tinge or color from any source. He always applauded the masters, whence and whoever. I remember his special defenses of Byron, Burns, Poe, Rabelais, Victor Hugo, George Sand, and others. There was always a little touch of pensive cadence in his superb voice; and I think there was something of the same sadness in his temperament and nature, — perhaps, too, in his literary structure. But he was a very buoyant, jovial, good-natured companion.

So much for a hasty melanged reminiscence and note of William O'Connor, — my dear, dear friend, and stanch (probably my stanchest) literary believer and champion from the first and throughout, without halt or demur, for twenty-five years. No better friend, — none more reliable through this life of one's ups and downs. On the occurrence of the latter he would be sure to make his appearance on the scene, eager, hopeful, full of fight like a perfect

knight of chivalry. For he was a born sample of the flower and symbol of olden time first-class knighthood here in the nineteenth century. Thrice blessed be his memory.

WALT WHITMAN.

CONTENTS

PAGE

THE GHOST 1

THE BRAZEN ANDROID 79

THE CARPENTER 211

THE GHOST.

At the West End of Boston is a quarter of some fifty streets, more or less, commonly known as Beacon Hill.

It is a rich and respectable quarter, sacred to the abodes of Our First Citizens. The very houses have become sentient of its prevailing character of riches and respectability; and, when the twilight deepens on the place, or at high noon, if your vision is gifted, you may see them as long rows of Our First Giants, with very corpulent or very broad fronts, with solid-set feet of sidewalk ending in square-toed curb-stone, with an air about them as if they had thrust their hard hands into their wealthy pockets forever, with a character of arctic reserve, and portly dignity, and a well-dressed, full-fed, self-satisfied, opulent, stony, repellent aspect to each, which says plainly, "I belong to a rich family, of the very highest respectability."

History, having much to say of Beacon Hill generally, has, on the present occasion, some-

thing to say particularly of a certain street which bends over the eminence, sloping steeply down to its base. It is an old street, — quaint, quiet, and somewhat picturesque. It was young once, though, — having been born before the Revolution, and was then given to the city by its father, Mr. Middlecott, who died without heirs, and did this much for posterity. Posterity has not been grateful to Mr. Middlecott. The street bore his name till he was dust, and then got the more aristocratic epithet of Bowdoin. Posterity has paid him by effacing what would have been his noblest epitaph. We may expect, after this, to see Faneuil Hall robbed of its name, and called Smith Hall! Republics are proverbially ungrateful. What safer claim to public remembrance has the old Huguenot, Peter Faneuil, than the old Englishman, Mr. Middlecott? Ghosts, it is said, have risen from the grave to reveal wrongs done them by the living; but it needs no ghost from the grave to prove the proverb about republics.

Bowdoin Street only differs from its kindred in a certain shady, grave, old-fogy, fossil aspect, just touched with a pensive solemnity, as if it thought to itself, "I 'm getting old, but I 'm highly respectable; that 's a comfort." It has, moreover, a dejected, injured air, as if it brooded solemnly on the wrong done to it by taking away

its original name and calling it Bowdoin ; but as if, being a very conservative street, it was resolved to keep a cautious silence on the subject, lest the Union should go to pieces. Sometimes it wears a profound and mysterious look, as if it could tell something if it had a mind to, but thought it best not. Something of the ghost of its father — it was the only child he ever had ! — walking there all the night, pausing at the corners to look up at the signs, which bear a strange name, and wringing his ghostly hands in lamentation at the wrong done his memory ! Rumor told it in a whisper, many years ago. Perhaps it was believed by a few of the oldest inhabitants of the city, but the highly respectable quarter never heard of it, and, if it had, would not have been bribed to believe it, by any sum. Some one had said that some very old person had seen a phantom there. Nobody knew who some one was. Nobody knew who the very old person was. Nobody knew who had seen it, nor when, nor how. The very rumor was spectral.

All this was many years ago. Since then it has been reported that a ghost was seen there one bitter Christmas eve, two or three years back. The twilight was already in the street ; but the evening lamps were not yet lighted in the windows, and the roofs and chimney-tops

were still distinct in the last clear light of the dropping day. It was light enough, however, for one to read easily, from the opposite sidewalk, "Dr. C. Renton," in black letters, on the silver plate of a door, not far from the Gothic portal of the Swedenborgian church. Near this door stood a misty figure, whose sad, spectral eyes floated on vacancy, and whose long, shadowy white hair lifted like an airy weft in the streaming wind. That was the ghost! It stood near the door a long time, without any other than a shuddering motion, as though it felt the searching blast, which swept furiously from the north up the declivity of the street, rattling the shutters in its headlong passage. Once or twice, when a passer-by, muffled warmly from the bitter air, hurried past, the phantom shrank closer to the wall, till he was gone. Its vague, mournful face seemed to watch for some one. The twilight darkened gradually, but it did not flit away. Patiently it kept its piteous look fixed in one direction, — watching, — watching; and, while the howling wind swept frantically through the chill air, it still seemed to shudder in the piercing cold.

A light suddenly kindled in an opposite window. As if touched by a gleam from the lamp, or as if by some subtle interior illumination, the spectre became faintly luminous, and a thin

smile seemed to quiver over its features. At the same moment, a strong, energetic figure — Dr. Renton himself — came in sight, striding down the slope of the pavement to his own door, his overcoat thrown back, as if the icy air were a tropical warmth to him, his hat set on the back of his head, and the loose ends of a kerchief about his throat streaming in the nor'wester. The wind set up a howl the moment he came in sight, and swept upon him ; and a curious agitation began on the part of the phantom. It glided rapidly to and fro, and moved in circles, and then, with the same swift, silent motion, sailed toward him, as if blown thither by the gale. Its long, thin arms, with something like a pale flame spiring from the tips of the slender fingers, were stretched out, as in greeting, while the wan smile played over its face ; and when he rushed by, unheedingly, it made a futile effort to grasp the swinging arms with which he appeared to buffet back the buffeting gale. Then it glided on by his side, looking earnestly into his countenance, and moving its pallid lips with agonized rapidity, as if it said, " Look at me — speak to me — speak to me — see me ! " But he kept his course with unconscious eyes and a vexed frown on his forehead betokening an irritated mind. The light that had shone in the figure of the phantom darkened slowly, till the form was

only a pale shadow. The wind had suddenly lulled, and no longer lifted its white hair. It still glided on with him, its head drooping on its breast, and its long arms hanging by its side; but when he reached the door, it suddenly sprang before him, gazing fixedly into his eyes, while a convulsive motion flashed over its grief-worn features, as if it had shrieked out a word. He had his foot on the step at the moment. With a start, he put his gloved hand to his forehead, while the vexed look went out quickly on his face. The ghost watched him breathlessly. But the irritated expression came back to his countenance more resolutely than before, and he began to fumble in his pocket for a latch-key, muttering petulantly, "What the devil is the matter with me now?" It seemed to him that a voice had cried clearly, yet as from afar, "Charles Renton!" — his own name. He had heard it in his startled mind; but then he knew he was in a highly wrought state of nervous excitement, and his medical science, with that knowledge for a basis, could have reared a formidable fortress of explanation against any phenomenon, were it even more wonderful than this.

He entered the house; kicked the door to; pulled off his overcoat; wrenched off his outer kerchief; slammed them on a branch of the

clothes-tree; banged his hat on top of them; wheeled about; pushed in the door of his library; strode in, and, leaving the door ajar, threw himself into an easy-chair, and sat there in the fire-reddened dusk, with his white brows knit, and his arms tightly locked on his breast. The ghost had followed him, sadly, and now stood motionless in a corner of the room, its spectral hands crossed on its bosom, and its white locks drooping down!

It was evident Dr. Renton was in a bad humor. The very library caught contagion from him, and became grouty and sombre. The furniture was grim and sullen and sulky; it made ugly shadows on the carpet and on the wall, in allopathic quantity; it took the red gleams from the fire on its polished surfaces in homœopathic globules, and got no good from them. The fire itself peered out sulkily from the black bars of the grate, and seemed resolved not to burn the fresh deposit of black coals at the top, but to take this as a good time to remember that those coals had been bought in the summer at five dollars a ton, — under price, mind you, — when poor people, who cannot buy at advantage, but must get their firing in the winter, would then have given nine or ten dollars for them. And so (glowered the fire), I am determined to think of that outrage, and not to light them, but to go

out myself, directly! And the fire got into such a spasm of glowing indignation over the injury that it lit a whole tier of black coals with a series of little explosions, before it could cool down, and sent a crimson gleam over the moody figure of its owner in the easy-chair, and over the solemn furniture, and into the shadowy corner filled by the ghost.

The spectre did not move when Dr. Renton arose and lit the chandelier. It stood there, still and gray, in the flood of mellow light. The curtains were drawn, and the twilight without had deepened into darkness. The fire was now burning in despite of itself, fanned by the wintry gusts, which found their way down the chimney. Dr. Renton stood with his back to it, his hands behind him, his bold white forehead shaded by a careless lock of black hair, and knit sternly, and the same frown in his handsome, open, searching dark eyes. Tall and strong, with an erect port, and broad, firm shoulders, high, resolute features, a commanding figure garbed in aristocratic black, and not yet verging into the proportions of obesity, — take him for all in all, a very fine and favorable specimen of the solid men of Boston. And seen in contrast (oh! could he but have known it!) with the attenuated figure of the poor, dim ghost!

Hark! a very light foot on the stairs, — a

rich rustle of silks. Everything still again, — Dr. Renton looking fixedly, with great sternness, at the half-open door, whence a faint, delicious perfume floats into the library. Somebody there, for certain. Somebody peeping in with very bright, arch eyes. Dr. Renton knew it, and prepared to maintain his ill-humor against the invader. His face became triply armed with severity for the encounter. That 's Netty, I know, he thought. His daughter. So it was. In she bounded. Bright little Netty! Gay little Netty! A dear and sweet little creature, to be sure, with a delicate and pleasant beauty of face and figure, it needed no costly silks to grace or heighten. There she stood. Not a word from her merry lips, but a smile which stole over all the solitary grimness of the library, and made everything better, and brighter, and fairer, in a minute. It floated down into the cavernous humor of Dr. Renton, and the gloom began to lighten directly, — though he would not own it, nor relax a single feature. But the wan ghost in the corner lifted its head to look at her, and slowly brightened as to something worthy a spirit's love and a dim phantom's smiles. Now then, Dr. Renton! the lines are drawn, and the foe is coming. Be martial, sir, as when you stand in the ranks of the Cadets on training-days! Steady, and stand the charge! So he did. He kept an inflexible

front as she glided toward him, softly, slowly, with her bright eyes smiling into his, and doing dreadful execution. Then she put her white arms around his neck, laid her dear, fair head on his breast, and peered up archly into his stern visage. Spite of himself, he could not keep the fixed lines on his face from breaking confusedly into a faint smile. Somehow or other, his hands came from behind him, and rested on her head. There! That 's all. Dr. Renton surrendered at discretion! One of the solid men of Boston was taken after a desperate struggle, — internal, of course, — for he kissed her, and said, " Dear little Netty! " and so she was.

The phantom watched her with a smile, and wavered and brightened as if about to glide to her; but it grew still, and remained.

" Pa in the sulks to-night? " she asked, in the most winning, playful, silvery voice.

" Pa 's a fool," he answered in his deep chest-tones, with a vexed good-humor, " and you know it."

" What 's the matter with pa? What makes him be a great bear? Papa-sy, dear," she continued, stroking his face with her little hands, and patting him, very much as Beauty might have patted the Beast after she fell in love with him; or as if he were a great baby, — in fact, he began to look then as if he were.

"Matter? Oh! everything 's the matter, little Netty. The world goes round too fast. My boots pinch. Somebody stole my umbrella last year. And I've got a headache." He concluded this fanciful abstract of his grievances by putting his arms around her, and kissing her again. Then he sat down in the easy-chair, and took her fondly on his knee.

"Pa 's got a headache! It is t-o-o bad, so it is," she continued in the same soothing, winning way, caressing his brow with her tiny hands. "It 's a horrid shame, so it is! P-o-o-r pa. Where does it ache, papa-sy, dear? In the forehead? Cerebrum or cerebellum, papa-sy? Occiput or sinciput, deary?"

"Bah! you little quiz," he replied, laughing and pinching her cheek, "none of your nonsense! And what are you dressed up in this way for, to-night? Silks, and laces, and essences, and what not! Where are you going, fairy?"

"Going out with mother for the evening, Dr. Renton," she replied briskly; "Mrs. Larrabee's party, papa-sy. Christmas eve, you know. And what are you going to give me for a present, to-morrow, pa-sy?"

"To-morrow will tell, little Netty."

"Good! And what are you going to give me, so that I can make *my* presents, Beary?"

"Ugh!" But he growled it in fun, and had a

pocket-book out from his breast-pocket directly after. Fives — tens — twenties — fifties — all crisp, and nice, and new bank-notes.

"Will that be enough, Netty?" He held up a twenty. The smiling face nodded assent, and the bright eyes twinkled.

"No, it won't. But *that* will," he continued, giving her a fifty.

"Fifty dollars, Globe Bank, Boston!" exclaimed Netty, making great eyes at him. "But we must take all we can get, pa-sy, must n't we? It 's too much, though. Thank you all the same, pa-sy, nevertheless." And she kissed him, and put the bill in a little bit of a porte-monnaie with a gay laugh.

"Well done, I declare!" he said. "But you 're going to the party?"

"Pretty soon, pa."

He made no answer, but sat smiling at her. The phantom watched them silently.

"What made pa so cross and grim to-night? Tell Netty — do," she pleaded.

"Oh! because, — everything went wrong with me to-day. There." And he looked as sulky, at that moment, as he ever did in his life.

"No, no, pa-sy, that won't do. I want the particulars," continued Netty, shaking her head smilingly.

"Particulars! Well, then, Miss Nathalie

Renton," he began, with mock gravity, "your professional father is losing some of his oldest patients. Everybody is in ruinous good health, and the grass is growing in the graveyards."

"In the winter time, papa? — smart grass!"

"Not that I want practice," he went on, getting into soliloquy, "or patients, either. A rich man who took to the profession simply for the love of it can't complain on that score. But to have an interloping she-doctor take a family I've attended ten years out of my hands, and to hear the hodge-podge gabble about physiological laws, and woman's rights, and no taxation without representation, they learn from her, — well, it 's too bad!"

"Is that all, pa-sy? Seems to me *I*'d like to vote, too," was Netty's piquant rejoinder.

"Hoh! I 'll warrant," growled her father. "Hope you 'll vote the Whig ticket, Netty, when you get your rights."

"Will the Union be dissolved, then, pa-sy, — when the Whigs are beaten?"

"Bah! you little plague," he growled, with a laugh. "But, then, you women don't know anything about politics. So there. As I was saying, everything went wrong with me to-day. I've been speculating in railroad stock, and singed my fingers. Then, old Tom Hollis outbid me to-day, at Leonard's, on a rare medical

work I had set my eyes upon having. Confound him! Then, again, two of my houses are tenantless, and there are folks in two others that won't pay their rent, and I can't get them out. Out they 'll go, though, or I 'll know why. And, to crown all — um-m. And I wish the Devil had him! — as he will."

"Had who, Beary-papa?"

"Him. I 'll tell you. The street-floor of one of my houses in Hanover Street lets for an oyster-room. They keep a bar there, and sell liquor. Last night they had a grand row, — a drunken fight, and one man was stabbed, it 's thought fatally."

"O father!" Netty's bright eyes dilated with horror.

"Yes. I hope he won't die. At any rate, there 's likely to be a stir about the matter, and my name will be called into question, then, as I 'm the landlord. And folks will make a handle of it, and there 'll be the deuce to pay generally."

He got back the stern, vexed frown to his face with the anticipation, and beat the carpet with his foot. The ghost still watched from the angle of the room, and seemed to darken, while its features looked troubled.

"But, father," said Netty, a little tremulously, "I would n't let my houses to such people. It 's

not right; is it? Why, it 's horrid to think of men getting drunk, and killing each other!"

Dr. Renton rubbed his hair into disorder, in vexation, and then subsided into solemnity.

"I know it 's not exactly right, Netty, but I can't help it. As I said before, I wish the Devil had that barkeeper. I ought to have ordered him out long ago, and then this would n't have happened. I 've increased his rent twice, hoping to get rid of him so; but he pays without a murmur; and what am I to do? You see, he was an occupant when the building came into my hands, and I let him stay. He pays me a good, round rent, and, apart from his cursed traffic, he 's a good tenant. What can I do? It 's a good thing for him, and it 's a good thing for me pecuniarily. Confound him! Here 's a nice rumpus brewing!"

"Dear pa, I 'm afraid it 's not a good thing for you," said Netty, caressing him and smoothing his tumbled hair, "nor for him either. I would n't mind the rent he pays you. I 'd order him out. It 's bad money. There 's blood on it."

She had grown pale, and her voice quivered. The phantom glided over to them, and laid its spectral hand upon her forehead. The shadowy eyes looked from under the misty hair into the doctor's face, and the pale lips moved as if

speaking the words heard only in the silence of his heart, — "Hear her, hear her!"

"I must think of it," resumed Dr. Renton coldly. "I'm resolved, at all events, to warn him that if anything of this kind occurs again he must quit at once. I dislike to lose a profitable tenant, for no other business would bring me the sum his does. Hang it, everybody does the best he can with his property, — why should n't I?"

The ghost, standing near them, drooped its head again on its breast, and crossed its arms. Netty was silent. Dr. Renton continued petulantly, —

"A precious set of people I manage to get into my premises. There 's a woman hires a couple of rooms for a dwelling, overhead, in that same building, and for three months I have n't got a cent from her. I know these people's tricks. Her month's notice expires to-morrow, and out she goes."

"Poor creature!" sighed Netty.

He knit his brow, and beat the carpet with his foot.

"Perhaps she can't pay you, pa," trembled the sweet, silvery voice. "You would n't turn her out in this cold winter, when she can't pay you, — would you, pa?"

"Why don't she get another house, and swin-

dle some one else?" he replied testily; "there 's plenty of rooms to let."

"Perhaps she can't find one, pa," answered Netty.

"Humbug!" retorted her father; "I know better."

"Pa, dear, if I were you, I 'd turn out that rumseller, and let the poor woman stay a little longer; just a little, pa."

"Sha'n't do it. Hah! that would be scattering money out of both pockets. Sha'n't do it. Out she shall go; and as for him, — well, he 'd better turn over a new leaf. There, let us leave the subject, darling. It vexes me. How did we contrive to get into this train? Bah!"

He drew her closer to him, and kissed her forehead. She sat quietly, with her head on his shoulder, thinking very gravely.

"I feel queerly to-day, little Netty," he began, after a short pause. "My nerves are all high-strung with the turn matters have taken."

"How is it, papa? The headache?" she answered.

"Y-e-s — n-o — not exactly; I don't know," he said dubiously; then, in an absent way, "It was that letter set me to think of him all day, I suppose."

"Why, pa, I declare," cried Netty, starting up, "if I did n't forget all about it, and I came

down expressly to give it to you! Where is it? Oh! here it is."

She drew from her pocket an old letter, faded to a pale yellow, and gave it to him. The ghost started suddenly.

"Why, bless my soul! it 's the very letter! Where did you get that, Nathalie?" asked Dr. Renton.

"I found it on the stairs after dinner, pa."

"Yes, I do remember taking it up with me; I must have dropped it," he answered musingly, gazing at the superscription. The ghost was gazing at it, too, with startled interest.

"What beautiful writing it is, pa," murmured the young girl. "Who wrote it to you? It looks yellow enough to have been written a long time since."

"Fifteen years ago, Netty. When you were a baby. And the hand that wrote it has been cold for all that time."

He spoke with a solemn sadness, as if memory lingered, with the heart of fifteen years ago, on an old grave. The dim figure by his side had bowed its head, and all was still.

"It is strange," he resumed, speaking vacantly and slowly, "I have not thought of him for so long a time, and to-day — especially this evening — I have felt as if he were constantly near me. It is a singular feeling."

He put his left hand to his forehead, and mused, — his right hand clasped his daughter's shoulder. The phantom slowly raised its head, and gazed at him with a look of unutterable tenderness.

"Who was he, father?" she asked with a hushed voice.

"A young man, an author, a poet. He had been my dearest friend, when we were boys; and, though I lost sight of him for years, — he led an erratic life, — we were friends when he died. Poor, poor fellow! Well, he is at peace."

The stern voice had saddened, and was almost tremulous. The spectral form was still.

"How did he die, father?"

"A long story, darling," he replied gravely, "and a sad one. He was very poor and proud. He was a genius, — that is, a person without an atom of practical talent. His parents died when he was near manhood. I was in college then. Thrown upon the world, he picked up a scanty subsistence with his pen, for a time. I could have got him a place in the counting-house, but he would not take it; in fact, he was n't fit for it. You can't harness Pegasus to the cart, you know. Besides, he despised mercantile life, without reason, of course; but he was always notional. His love of literature was one of the rocks he foundered on. He was n't successful; his best com-

positions were too delicate, fanciful, to please the popular taste; and then he was full of the radical and fanatical notions which infected so many people at that time in New England, and infect them now, for that matter; and his sublimated, impracticable ideas and principles, which he kept till his dying day, and which, I confess, alienated me from him, always staved off his chances of success. Consequently, he never rose above the drudgery of some employment on newspapers. Then he was terribly passionate, not without cause, I allow; but it was n't wise. What I mean is this: if he saw, or if he fancied he saw, any wrong or injury done to any one, it was enough to throw him into a frenzy; he would get black in the face and absolutely shriek out his denunciations of the wrong-doer. I do believe he would have visited his own brother with the most unsparing invective, if that brother had laid a harming finger on a street-beggar, or a colored man, or a poor person of any kind. I don't blame the feeling, though with a man like him it was very apt to be a false or mistaken one; but, at any rate, its exhibition was n't sensible. Well, as I was saying, he buffeted about in this world a long time, poorly paid, fed, and clad, taking more care of other people than he did of himself. Then mental suffering, physical exposure, and want killed him."

The stern voice had grown softer than a child's. The same look of unutterable tenderness brooded on the mournful face of the phantom by his side; but its thin, shining hand was laid upon his head, and its countenance had undergone a change. The form was still undefined, but the features had become distinct. They were those of a young man, beautiful and wan, and marked with great suffering.

A pause had fallen on the conversation, in which the father and daughter heard the solemn sighing of the wintry wind around the dwelling. The silence seemed scarcely broken by the voice of the young girl.

"Dear father, this was very sad. Did you say he died of want?"

"Of want, my child, of hunger and cold. I don't doubt it. He had wandered about, as I gather, houseless for a couple of days and nights. It was in December, too. Some one found him, on a rainy night, lying in the street, drenched and burning with fever, and had him taken to the hospital. It appears that he had always cherished a strange affection for me, though I had grown away from him; and in his wild ravings he constantly mentioned my name, and they sent for me. That was our first meeting after two years. I found him in the hospital — dying. Heaven can witness that I felt all my

old love for him return then, but he was delirious, and never recognized me. And, Nathalie, his hair, — it had been coal-black, and he wore it very long, — he would n't let them cut it, either, and as they knew no skill could save him, they let him have his way, — his hair was then as white as snow! God alone knows what that brain must have suffered to blanch hair which had been as black as the wing of a raven!"

He covered his eyes with his hand, and sat silently. The fingers of the phantom still shone dimly on his head, and its white locks drooped above him, like a weft of light.

"What was his name, father?" asked the pitying girl.

"George Feval. The very name sounds like fever. He died on Christmas eve, fifteen years ago this night. It was on his death-bed, while his mind was tossing on a sea of delirious fancies, that he wrote me this long letter, — for to the last, I was uppermost in his thoughts. It is a wild, incoherent thing, of course, — a strange mixture of sense and madness. But I have kept it as a memorial of him. I have not looked at it for years; but this morning I found it among my papers, and somehow it has been in my mind all day."

He slowly unfolded the faded sheets, and

sadly gazed at the writing. His daughter had risen from her half-recumbent posture, and now bent her graceful head over the leaves. The phantom covered its face with its hands.

"What a beautiful manuscript it is, father!" she exclaimed. "The writing is faultless."

"It is indeed," he replied. "Would he had written his life as fairly!"

"Read it, father," said Nathalie.

"No, but I'll read you a detached passage here and there," he answered, after a pause. "The rest you may read yourself some time, if you wish. It is painful to me. Here's the beginning: —

"'My dear Charles Renton, — Adieu, and adieu. It is Christmas eve, and I'm going home. I am soon to exhale from my flesh, like the spirit of a broken flower. *Exultemus* forever!' . . .

"It is very wild. His mind was in a fever-craze. Here is a passage that seems to refer to his own experience of life: —

"'Your friendship was dear to me. I give you true love. Stocks and returns. You are rich, but I did not wish to be your bounty's pauper. Could I beg? I had my work to do for

the world, but oh! the world has no place for souls that can only love and suffer. How many miles to Babylon? Threescore and ten. Not so far — not near so far! Ask starvelings — they know.

. . . . . .

"'I wanted to do the world good, and the world has killed me, Charles.'"

"It frightens me," said Nathalie, as he paused.

"We will read no more," he replied sombrely. "It belongs to the psychology of madness. To me, who knew him, there are gleams of sense in it, and passages where the delirium of the language is only a transparent veil on the meaning. All the remainder is devoted to what he thought important advice to me. But it 's all wild and vague. Poor — poor George!"

The phantom still hid its face in its hands, as the doctor slowly turned over the pages of the letter. Nathalie, bending over the leaves, laid her finger on the last, and asked, "What are those closing sentences, father? Read them."

"Oh! that is what he called his 'last counsel' to me. It 's as wild as the rest, — tinctured with the prevailing ideas of his career. First he says, 'Farewell — farewell;' then he bids me take his 'counsel into memory on Christmas day;'

then after enumerating all the wretched classes he can think of in the country, he says: 'These are your sisters and your brothers, — love them all.' Here he says, 'O friend, strong in wealth for so much good, take my last counsel. In the name of the Saviour, I charge you be true and tender to mankind.' He goes on to bid me 'live and labor for the fallen, the neglected, the suffering, and the poor;' and finally ends by advising me to help upset any, or all, institutions, laws, and so forth, that bear hardly on the fag-ends of society; and tells me that what he calls 'a service to humanity' is worth more to the doer than a service to anything else, or than anything we can gain from the world. Ah, well! poor George."

"But is n't all that true, father?" said Netty; "it seems so."

"H'm," he murmured through his closed lips. Then, with a vague smile, folding up the letter, meanwhile, he said, "Wild words, Netty, wild words. I've no objection to charity, judiciously given; but poor George's notions are not mine. Every man for himself, is a good general rule. Every man for humanity, as George has it, and in his acceptation of the principle, would send us all to the almshouse pretty soon. The greatest good of the greatest number, — that 's my rule of action. There are plenty of

good institutions for the distressed, and I 'm willing to help support 'em, and do. But as for making a martyr of one's self, or tilting against the necessary evils of society, or turning philanthropist at large, or any quixotism of that sort, I don't believe in it. We did n't make the world, and we can't mend it. Poor George. Well, — he 's at rest. The world was n't the place for him."

They grew silent. The spectre glided slowly to the wall, and stood as if it were thinking what, with Dr. Renton's rule of action, was to become of the greatest good of the smallest number. Nathalie sat on her father's knee, thinking only of George Feval, and of his having been starved and grieved to death.

"Father," said Nathalie softly, "I felt while you were reading the letter as if he were near us. Did n't you? The room was so light and still, and the wind sighed so."

"Netty, dear, I 've felt that all day, I believe," he replied. "Hark! there is the door-bell. Off goes the spirit-world, and here comes the actual. Confound it! Some one to see me, I 'll warrant, and I 'm not in the mood."

He got into a fret at once. Netty was not the Netty of an hour ago, or she would have coaxed him out of it. But she did not notice it now in her abstraction. She had risen at the

tinkle of the bell, and seated herself in a chair. Presently a nose, with a great pimple on the end of it, appeared at the edge of the door, and a weak, piping voice said, reckless of the proper tense, "There was a woman wanted to see you, sir."

"Who is it, James? — no matter, show her in."

He got up with the vexed scowl on his face, and walked the room. In a minute the library door opened again, and a pale, thin, rigid, frozen-looking little woman, scantily clad, the weather being considered, entered, and dropped a curt, awkward bow to Dr. Renton.

"Oh, Mrs. Miller! Good-evening, ma'am. Sit down," he said with a cold, constrained civility.

The little woman faintly said, "Good-evening, Dr. Renton," and sat down stiffly, with her hands crossed before her, in the chair nearest the wall. This was the obdurate tenant, who had paid no rent for three months, and had a notice to quit, expiring to-morrow.

"Cold evening, ma'am," remarked Dr. Renton, in his hard way.

"Yes, sir, it is," was the cowed, suppressed answer.

"Won't you sit near the fire, ma'am?" said Netty gently; "you look cold."

"No, miss, thank you. I 'm not cold," was

the faint reply. She was cold, though, as well she might be with her poor, thin shawl and open bonnet, in such a bitter night as it was outside. And there was a rigid, sharp, suffering look in her pinched features that betokened she might have been hungry, too. "Poor people don't mind the cold weather, miss," she said, with a weak smile, her voice getting a little stronger. "They have to bear it, and they get used to it."

She had not evidently borne it long enough to effect the point of indifference. Netty looked at her with a tender pity. Dr. Renton thought to himself, "Hoh! — blazoning her poverty, — manufacturing sympathy already, — the old trick;" and steeled himself against any attacks of that kind, looking jealously, meanwhile, at Netty.

"Well, Mrs. Miller," he said, "what is it this evening? I suppose you 've brought me my rent."

The little woman grew paler, and her voice seemed to fail on her quivering lips. Netty cast a quick, beseeching look at her father.

"Nathalie, please to leave the room." "We 'll have no nonsense carried on here," he thought triumphantly, as Netty rose, and obeyed the stern, decisive order, leaving the door ajar behind her.

He seated himself in his chair, and resolutely put his right leg up to rest on his left knee. He did not look at his tenant's face, determined that her piteous expressions (got up for the occasion, of course) should be wasted on him.

"Well, Mrs. Miller," he said again.

"Dr. Renton," she began, faintly gathering her voice as she proceeded, "I have come to see you about the rent. I am very sorry, sir, to have made you wait, but we have been unfortunate."

"Sorry, ma'am," he replied, knowing what was coming; "but your misfortunes are not my affair. We all have misfortunes, ma'am. But we must pay our debts, you know."

"I expected to have got money from my husband before this, sir," she resumed, "and I wrote to him. I got a letter from him to-day, sir, and it said that he sent me fifty dollars a month ago, in a letter; and it appears that the post-office is to blame, or somebody, for I never got it. It was nearly three months' wages, sir, and it is very hard to lose it. If it had n't been for that your rent would have been paid long ago, sir."

"Don't believe a word of *that* story," thought Dr. Renton, sententiously.

"I thought, sir," she continued, emboldened by his silence, "that if you would be willing to

wait a little longer, we would manage to pay you soon, and not let it occur again. It has been a hard winter with us, sir; firing is high, and provisions, and everything; and we 're only poor people, you know, and it 's difficult to get along."

The doctor made no reply.

"My husband was unfortunate, sir, in not being able to get employment here," she resumed; "his being out of work in the autumn threw us all back, and we 've got nothing to depend on but his earnings. The family that he 's in now, sir, don't give him very good pay, — only twenty dollars a month, and his board, — but it was the best chance he could get, and it was either go to Baltimore with them, or stay at home and starve, and so he went, sir. It 's been a hard time with us, and one of the children is sick, now, with a fever, and we don't hardly know how to make out a living. And so, sir, I have come here this evening, leaving the children alone, to ask you if you would n't be kind enough to wait a little longer, and we 'll hope to make it right with you in the end."

"Mrs. Miller," said Dr. Renton, with stern composure, "I have no wish to question the truth of any statement you may make; but I must tell you plainly that I can't afford to let my houses for nothing. I told you a month ago

that if you could n't pay me my rent you must vacate the premises. You know very well that there are plenty of tenants who are able and willing to pay when the money comes due. You *know* that."

He paused as he said this, and, glancing at her, saw her pale lips falter. It shook the cruelty of his purpose a little, and he had a vague feeling that he was doing wrong. Not without a proud struggle, during which no word was spoken, could he beat it down. Meanwhile, the phantom had advanced a pace toward the centre of the room.

"That is the state of the matter, ma'am," he resumed coldly. "People who will not pay me my rent must not live in my tenements. You must move out. I have no more to say."

"Dr. Renton," she said faintly, "I have a sick child, — how can I move now? Oh, sir, it 's Christmas eve, — don't be hard with us!"

Instead of touching him, this speech irritated him beyond measure. Passing all considerations of her difficult position involved in her piteous statement, his anger flashed at once on her implication that he was unjust and unkind. So violent was his excitement that it whirled away the words that rushed to his lips, and only fanned the fury that sparkled from the whiteness of his face in his eyes.

"Be patient with us, sir," she continued; "we are poor, but we mean to pay you; and we can't move now in this cold weather; please, don't be hard with us, sir."

The fury now burst out on his face in a red and angry glow, and the words came.

"Now, attend to me!" He rose to his feet. "I will not hear any more from you. I know nothing of your poverty, nor of the condition of your family. All I know is that you owe me three months' rent, and that you can't or won't pay me. I say, therefore, leave the premises to people who can and will. You have had your legal notice; quit my house to-morrow; if you don't, your furniture shall be put in the street. Mark me, — to-morrow!"

The phantom had rushed into the centre of the room. Standing face to face with him, — dilating, — blackening, — its whole form shuddering with a fury to which his own was tame, — the semblance of a shriek upon its flashing lips, and on its writhing features, and an unearthly anger streaming from its bright and terrible eyes, — it seemed to throw down, with its tossing arms, mountains of hate and malediction on the head of him whose words had smitten poverty and suffering, and whose heavy hand was breaking up the barriers of a home.

Dr. Renton sank again into his chair. His

tenant, — not a woman! — not a sister in humanity! — but only his tenant; she sat crushed and frightened by the wall. He knew it vaguely. Conscience was battling in his heart with the stubborn devils that had entered there. The phantom stood before him, like a dark cloud in the image of a man. But its darkness was lightening slowly, and its ghostly anger had passed away.

The poor woman, paler than before, had sat mute and trembling, with all her hopes ruined. Yet her desperation forbade her to abandon the chances of his mercy, and she now said, —

"Dr. Renton, you surely don't mean what you have told me. Won't you bear with me a little longer, and we will yet make it all right with you?"

"I have given you my answer," he returned coldly; "I have no more to add. I never take back anything I say — never!"

It was true. He never did — never! She half rose from her seat as if to go; but weak and sickened with the bitter result of her visit, she sunk down again with her head bowed. There was a pause. Then, solemnly gliding across the lighted room, the phantom stole to her side with a glory of compassion on its wasted features. Tenderly, as a son to a mother, it bent over her; its spectral hands of light rested upon her in

caressing and benediction; its shadowy fall of hair, once blanched by the anguish of living and loving, floated on her throbbing brow; and resignation and comfort not of this world sank upon her spirit, and consciousness grew dim within her, and care and sorrow seemed to die.

He who had been so cruel and so hard sat silent in black gloom. The stern and sullen mood, from which had dropped but one fierce flash of anger, still hung above the heat of his mind, like a dark rack of thunder-cloud. It would have burst anew into a fury of rebuke, had he but known his daughter was listening at the door while the colloquy went on. It might have flamed violently, had his tenant made any further attempt to change his purpose. She had not. She had left the room meekly, with the same curt, awkward bow that marked her entrance. He recalled her manner very indistinctly; for a feeling like a mist began to gather in his mind, and make the occurrences of moments before uncertain.

Alone, now, he was oppressed with a sensation that something was near him. Was it a spiritual instinct? for the phantom stood by his side. It stood silent, with one hand raised above his head, from which a pale flame seemed to flow downward to his brain; its other hand pointed movelessly to the open letter on the table beside him.

He took the sheets from the table, thinking, at the moment, only of George Feval; but the first line on which his eye rested was, "In the name of the Saviour, I charge you, be true and tender to mankind!" And the words touched him like a low voice from the grave. Their penetrant reproach pierced the hardness of his heart. He tossed the letter back on the table. The very manner of the act accused him of an insult to the dead. In a moment he took up the faded sheets more reverently, but only to lay them down again.

He had not been well that day, and he now felt worse than before. The pain in his head had given place to a strange sense of dilation, and there was a silent, confused riot in his fevered brain, which seemed to him like the incipience of insanity. Striving to divert his mind from what had passed, by reflection on other themes, he could not hold his thoughts; they came teeming but dim, and slipped and fell away; and only the one circumstance of his recent cruelty, mixed with remembrance of George Feval, recurred and clung with vivid persistence. This tortured him. Sitting there, with arms tightly interlocked, he resolved to wrench his mind down by sheer will upon other things; and a savage pleasure at what at once seemed success took possession of him. In this mood,

he heard soft footsteps and the rustle of festal garments on the stairs, and had a fierce complacency in being able to apprehend clearly that it was his wife and daughter going out to the party. In a moment he heard the controlled and even voice of Mrs. Renton, — a serene and polished lady with whom he had lived for years, in cold and civil alienation, both seeing as little of each other as possible. With a scowl of will upon his brow, he received her image distinctly into his mind, even to the minutiæ of the dress and ornaments he knew she wore, and felt an absolutely savage exultation in his ability to retain it. Then came the sound of the closing of the hall door and the rattle of receding wheels, and somehow it was Nathalie and not his wife that he was holding so grimly in his thought, and with her, salient and vivid as before, the tormenting remembrance of his tenant, connected with the memory of George Feval. Springing to his feet, he walked the room.

He had thrown himself on a sofa, still striving to be rid of his remorseful visitations, when the library door opened, and the inside man appeared, with his hand held bashfully over his nose. It flashed on him at once that his tenant's husband was the servant, of a family, like this fellow; and, irritated that the whole matter should be thus broadly forced upon him in

another way, he harshly asked him what he wanted. The man only came in to say that Mrs. Renton and the young lady had gone out for the evening, but that tea was laid for him in the dining-room. He did not want any tea, and if anybody called, he was not at home. With this charge, the servant left the room, closing the door behind him.

If he could but sleep a little! Rising from the sofa, he turned the lights of the chandelier low, and screened the fire. The room was still. The ghost stood, faintly radiant, in a remote corner. Dr. Renton lay down again, but not to repose. Things he had forgotten of his dead friend now started up again in remembrance, fresh from the grave of many years; and not one of them but linked itself by some mysterious bond to something connected with his tenant, and became an accusation.

He had lain thus for more than hour, feeling more and more unmanned by illness, and his mental excitement fast becoming intolerable, when he heard a low strain of music, from the Swedenborgian chapel, hard by. Its first impression was one of solemnity and rest, and its first sense, in his mind, was of relief. Perhaps it was the music of an evening meeting; or it might be that the organist and choir had met for practice. Whatever its purpose, it breathed

through his heated fancy like a cool and fragrant wind. It was vague and sweet and wandering at first, straying on into a strain more mysterious and melancholy, but very shadowy and subdued, and evoking the innocent and tender moods of early youth before worldliness had hardened around his heart. Gradually, as he listened to it, the fires in his brain were allayed, and all yielded to a sense of coolness and repose. He seemed to sink from trance to trance of utter rest, and yet was dimly aware that either something in his own condition, or some supernatural accession of tone, was changing the music from its proper quality to a harmony more infinite and awful. It was still low and indeterminate and sweet, but had unaccountably and strangely swelled into a gentle and sombre dirge, incommunicably mournful, and filled with a dark significance that touched him in his depth of rest with a secret tremor and awe. As he listened, rapt and vaguely wondering, the sense of his tranced sinking seemed to come to an end, and with the feeling of one who had been descending for many hours, and at length lay motionless at the bottom of a deep, dark chasm, he heard the music fail and cease.

A pause, and then it rose again, blended with the solemn voices of the choir, sublimed and dilated now, reaching him as though from weird

night gulfs of the upper air, and charged with an overmastering pathos as of the lamentations of angels. In the dimness and silence, in the aroused and exalted condition of his being, the strains seemed unearthly in their immense and desolate grandeur of sorrow, and their mournful and dark significance was now for him. Working within him the impression of vast, innumerable fleeing shadows, thick-crowding memories of all the ways and deeds of an existence fallen from its early dreams and aims poured across the midnight of his soul, and under the streaming melancholy of the dirge, his life showed like some monstrous treason. It did not terrify or madden him; he listened to it rapt utterly as in some deadening ether of dream; yet feeling to his inmost core all its powerful grief and accusation, and quietly aghast at the sinister consciousness it gave him. Still it swelled, gathering and sounding on into yet mightier pathos, till all at once it darkened and spread wide in wild despair, and aspiring again into a pealing agony of supplication, quivered and died away in a low and funereal sigh.

The tears streamed suddenly upon his face; his soul lightened and turned dark within him; and, as one faints away, so consciousness swooned, and he fell suddenly down a precipice of sleep. The music rose again, a pensive and

holy chant, and sounded on to its close, unaffected by the action of his brain, for he slept and heard it no more. He lay tranquilly, hardly seeming to breathe, in motionless repose. The room was dim and silent, and the furniture took uncouth shapes around him. The red glow upon the ceiling, from the screened fire, showed the misty figure of the phantom kneeling by his side. All light had gone from the spectral form. It knelt beside him, mutely, as in prayer. Once it gazed at his quiet face with a mournful tenderness, and its shadowy hands caressed his forehead. Then it resumed its former attitude, and the slow hours crept by.

At last it rose and glided to the table, on which lay the open letter. It seemed to try to lift the sheets with its misty hands, but vainly. Next it essayed the lifting of a pen which lay there, but failed. It was a piteous sight, to see its idle efforts on these shapes of grosser matter, which appeared now to have to it but the existence of illusions. Wandering about the shadowy room, it wrung its phantom hands as in despair.

Presently it grew still. Then it passed quickly to his side, and stood before him. He slept calmly. It placed one ghostly hand above his forehead, and with the other pointed to the open letter. In this attitude its shape grew momen-

tarily more distinct. It began to kindle into brightness. The pale flame again flowed from its hand, streaming downward to his brain. A look of trouble darkened the sleeping face. Stronger, — stronger ; brighter, — brighter ; until at last it stood before him, a glorious shape of light, with an awful look of commanding love in its shining features : and the sleeper sprang to his feet with a cry !

The phantom had vanished. He saw nothing. His first impression was, not that he had dreamed, but that, awaking in the familiar room, he had seen the spirit of his dead friend, bright and awful by his side, and that it had gone ! In the flash of that quick change, from sleeping to waking, he had detected, he thought, the unearthly being that, he now felt, watched him from behind the air, and it had vanished ! The library was the same as in the moment of that supernatural revealing ; the open letter lay upon the table still ; only *that* was gone which had made these common aspects terrible. Then all the hard, strong skepticism of his nature, which had been driven backward by the shock of his first conviction, recoiled, and rushed within him, violently struggling for its former vantage-ground ; till at length it achieved the foothold for a doubt. Could he have dreamed ? The ghost, invisible, still watched him. Yes, a dream, —

only a dream; but how vivid, how strange! With a slow thrill creeping through his veins, the blood curdling at his heart, a cold sweat starting on his forehead, he stared through the dimness of the room. All was vacancy.

With a strong shudder, he strode forward, and turned up the flames of the chandelier. A flood of garish light filled the apartment. In a moment, remembering the letter to which the phantom of his dream had pointed, he turned and took it from the table. The last page lay upward, and every word of the solemn counsel at the end seemed to dilate on the paper, and all its mighty meaning rushed upon his soul. Trembling in his own despite, he laid it down and moved away. A physician, he remembered that he was in a state of violent nervous excitement, and thought that when he grew calmer its effects would pass from him. But the hand that had touched him had gone down deeper than the physician, and reached what God had made.

He strove in vain. The very room, in its light and silence, and the lurking sentiment of something watching him, became terrible. He could not endure it. The devils in his heart, grown pusillanimous, cowered beneath the flashing strokes of his aroused and terrible conscience. He could not endure it. He must go out. He will walk the streets. It is not late, — it is but ten o'clock. He will go.

The air of his dream still hung heavily about him. He was in the street, — he hardly remembered how he had got there, or when; but there he was, wrapped up from the searching cold, thinking, with a quiet horror in his mind, of the darkened room he had left behind, and haunted by the sense that something was groping about there in the darkness, searching for him. The night was still and cold. The full moon was in the zenith. Its icy splendor lay on the bare streets, and on the walls of the dwellings. The lighted oblong squares of curtained windows, here and there, seemed dim and waxen in the frigid glory. The familiar aspect of the quarter had passed away, leaving behind only a corpse-like neighborhood, whose huge, dead features, staring rigidly through the thin, white shroud of moonlight that covered all, left no breath upon the stainless skies. Through the vast silence of the night he passed along; the very sound of his footfalls was remote to his muffled sense.

Gradually, as he reached the first corner, he had an uneasy feeling that a thing — a formless, unimaginable thing — was dogging him. He had thought of going down to his club-room; but he now shrank from entering, with this thing near him, the lighted rooms where his set were busy with cards and billiards, over their liquors and cigars, and where the heated air was full of

their idle faces and careless chatter, lest some one should bawl out that he was pale, and ask him what was the matter, and he should answer, tremblingly, that something was following him, and was near him then! He must get rid of it first; he must walk quickly, and baffle its pursuit by turning sharp corners, and plunging into devious streets and crooked lanes, and so lose it!

It was difficult to reach through memory to the crazy chaos of his mind on that night, and recall the route he took while haunted by this feeling; but he afterward remembered that, without any other purpose than to baffle his imaginary pursuer, he traversed at a rapid pace a large portion of the moonlit city; always (he knew not why) avoiding the more populous thoroughfares, and choosing unfrequented and tortuous byways, but never ridding himself of that horrible confusion of mind in which the faces of his dead friend and the pale woman were strangely blended, nor of the fancy that he was followed. Once, as he passed the hospital where Feval died, a faint hint seemed to flash and vanish from the clouds of his lunacy, and almost identify the dogging goblin with the figure of his dream; but the conception instantly mixed with a disconnected remembrance that this was Christmas eve, and then slipped from him, and was

lost. He did not pause there, but strode on. But just there, what had been frightful became hideous. For at once he was possessed with the conviction that the thing that lurked at a distance behind him was quickening its movement, and coming up to seize him. The dreadful fancy stung him like a goad, and, with a start, he accelerated his flight, horribly conscious that what he feared was slinking along in the shadow, close to the dark bulks of the houses, resolutely pursuing, and bent on overtaking him. Faster! His footfalls rang hollow and loud on the moonlit pavement, and in contrast with their rapid thuds he felt it as something peculiarly terrible that the furtive thing behind slunk after him with soundless feet. Faster, faster! Traversing only the most unfrequented streets, at that late hour of a cold winter night, he met no one, and with a terrifying consciousness that his pursuer was gaining on him, he desperately strode on. He did not dare to look behind, dreading less what he might see than the momentary loss of speed the action might occasion. Faster, faster, faster! And all at once he knew that the dogging thing had dropped its stealthy pace and was racing up to him. With a bound he broke into a run, seeing, hearing, heeding nothing, aware only that the other was silently louping on his track two steps to his one; and with

that frantic apprehension upon him, he gained the next street, flung himself around the corner with his back to the wall, and his arms convulsively drawn up for a grapple; and felt something rush whirring past his flank, striking him on the shoulder, as it went by, with a buffet that made a shock break through his frame. That shock restored him to his senses. His delusion was suddenly shattered. The goblin was gone. He was free.

He stood panting, like one just roused from some terrible dream, wiping the reeking perspiration from his forehead, and thinking confusedly and wearily what a fool he had been. He felt he had wandered a long distance from his house, but had no distinct perception of his whereabouts. He only knew he was in some thinly-peopled street, whose familiar aspect seemed lost to him in the magical disguise the superb moonlight had thrown over all. Suddenly a film seemed to drop from his eyes, as they became riveted on a lighted window, on the opposite side of the way. He started, and a secret terror crept over him, vaguely mixed with the memory of the shock he had felt as he turned the last corner, and his distinct, awful feeling that something invisible had passed him. At the same instant he felt, and thrilled to feel, a touch, as of a light finger, on his cheek. He

was in Hanover Street. Before him was the house, — the oyster-room staring at him through the lighted transparencies of its two windows, like two square eyes, below; and his tenant's light in a chamber above! The added shock which this discovery gave to the heaving of his heart made him gasp for breath. Could it be? Did he still dream? While he stood panting and staring at the building the city clocks began to strike. Eleven o'clock; it was ten when he came away; how he must have driven! His thoughts caught up the word. Driven, — by what? Driven from his house in horror, through street and lane, over half the city, — driven, — hunted in terror, and smitten by a shock here! Driven, — driven! He could not rid his mind of the word, nor of the meaning it suggested. The pavements about him began to ring and echo with the tramp of many feet, and the cold, brittle air was shivered with the noisy voices that had roared and bawled applause and laughter at the National Theatre all the evening, and were now singing and howling homeward. Groups of rude men, and ruder boys, their breaths steaming in the icy air, began to tramp by, jostling him as they passed, till he was forced to draw back to the wall, and give them the sidewalk. Dazed and giddy, in cold fear, and with the returning sense of something near

him, he stood and watched the groups that pushed and tumbled in through the entrance of the oyster-room, whistling and chattering as they went, and banging the door behind them. He noticed that some came out presently, banging the door harder, and went, smoking and shouting, down the street. Still they poured in and out, while the street was startled with their stimulated riot, and the bar-room within echoed their trampling feet and hoarse voices. Then, as his glance wandered upward to his tenant's window, he thought of the sick child, mixing this hideous discord in the dreams of fever. The word brought up the name and the thought of his dead friend. "In the name of the Saviour, I charge you be true and tender to mankind!" The memory of these words seemed to ring clearly, as if a voice had spoken them, above the roar that suddenly rose in his mind. In that moment he felt himself a wretched and most guilty man. He felt that his cruel words had entered that humble home, to make desperate poverty more desperate, to sicken sickness, and to sadden sorrow. Before him was the dram-shop, let and licensed to nourish the worst and most brutal appetites and instincts of human natures, at the sacrifice of all their highest and holiest tendencies. The throng of tipplers and drunkards was swarming through its hopeless door,

to gulp the fiery liquor whose fumes give all shames, vices, miseries, and crimes a lawless strength and life, and change the man into the pig or tiger. Murder was done, or nearly done, within those walls last night. Within those walls no good was ever done, but daily, unmitigated evil, whose results were reaching on to torture unborn generations. He had consented to it all! He could not falter, or equivocate, or evade, or excuse. His dead friend's words rang in his conscience like the trump of the judgment angel. He was conquered.

Slowly, the resolve instantly to go in uprose within him, and with it a change came upon his spirit, and the natural world, sadder than before, but sweeter, seemed to come back to him. A great feeling of relief flowed upon his mind. Pale and trembling still, he crossed the street with a quick, unsteady step, entered a yard at the side of the house, and, brushing by a host of white, rattling spectres of frozen clothes, which dangled from lines in the inclosure, mounted some wooden steps, and rang the bell. In a minute he heard footsteps within, and saw the gleam of a lamp. His heart palpitated violently as he heard the lock turning, lest the answerer of his summons might be his tenant. The door opened, and, to his relief, he stood before a rather decent-looking Irishman, bending

forward in his stocking-feet, with one boot and a lamp in his hand. The man stared at him from a wild head of tumbled red hair, with a half smile round his loose, open mouth, and said, "Begorra!" This was a second-floor tenant.

Dr. Renton was relieved at the sight of him; but he rather failed in an attempt at his rent-day suavity of manner, when he said, —

"Good-evening, Mr. Flanagan. Do you think I can see Mrs. Miller to-night?"

"She 's up *there*, doctber, anyway." Mr. Flanagan made a sudden start for the stairs, with the boot and lamp at arm's length before him, and stopped as suddenly. "Yu'll go up? or wud she come down to ye?" There was as much anxious indecision in Mr. Flanagan's general aspect, pending the reply, as if he had to answer the question himself.

"I 'll go up, Mr. Flanagan," returned Dr. Renton, stepping in, after a pause, and shutting the door. "But I 'm afraid she 's in bed."

"Naw, — she 's not, sur." Mr. Flanagan made another feint with the boot and lamp at the stairs, but stopped again in curious bewilderment, and rubbed his head. Then, with another inspiration, and speaking with such velocity that his words ran into each other, pell-mell he continued: "Th' small girl 's sick, sur. Begorra, I wor just pullin' on th' boots tuh gaw for

the docther in th' nixt streth, an' summons him to her relehf, fur it 's bad she is. A'id betther be goan." Another start, and a movement to put on the boot instantly, baffled by his getting the lamp into the leg of it, and involving himself in difficulties in trying to get it out again without dropping either, and stopped finally by Dr. Renton.

"You need n't go, Mr. Flanagan. I'll see to the child. Don't go."

He stepped slowly up the stairs, followed by the bewildered Flanagan. All this time Dr. Renton was listening to the racket from the bar-room. Clinking of glasses, rattling of dishes, trampling of feet, oaths and laughter, and a confused din of coarse voices, mingling with boisterous calls for oysters and drink, came, hardly deadened by the partition walls, from the haunt below, and echoed through the corridors. Loud enough within, — louder in the street without, where the oysters and drink were reeling and roaring off to brutal dreams. People trying to sleep here ; a sick child upstairs. Listen! "*Two* stew! *One* roast! *Four* ale! Hurry 'em up! *Three* stew! *In* number six! *One* fancy — *two* roast! *One* sling! Three brandy — *hot!* *Two* stew! *One* whisk' *skin!* Hurry 'em up! *What* yeh '*bout!* *Three* brand' punch — *hot!* *Four* stew! *What* ye-e-h 'BOUT! *Two* gin-

cock-ti'l! *One* stew! Hu-r-r-y 'em up!" Clashing, rattling, cursing, swearing, laughing, shouting, trampling, stumbling, driving, slamming of doors. "Hu-r-ry 'em UP."

"Flanagan," said Dr. Renton, stopping at the first landing, "do you have this noise every night?"

"Naise? Hoo! Divil a night, docther, but I 'm wehked out ov me bed wid 'em, Sundays an' all. Sure did n't they murdher wan of 'em, out an' out last night!"

"Is the man dead?"

"Dead? Troth he is. An' cowld."

"H'm," — through his compressed lips. "Flanagan, you need n't come up. I know the door. Just hold the light for me here. There, that 'll do. Thank you." He whispered the last words from the top of the second flight.

"Are ye there, docther?" Flanagan anxious to the last, and trying to peer up at him with the lamplight in his eyes.

"Yes. That 'll do. Thank you!" in the same whisper. Before he could tap at the door, then darkening in the receding light, it opened suddenly, and a big Irishwoman bounced out, and then whisked in again, calling to some one in an inner room, "Here he is, Mrs. Mill'r;" and then bounced out again, with a "Walk royt in, if *you* plaze; here 's the choild;" and

whisked in again, with a "Sure an' Jehms was quick;" never once looking at him, and utterly unconscious of the presence of her landlord. He had hardly stepped into the room and taken off his hat, when Mrs. Miller came from the inner chamber with a lamp in her hand. How she started! With her pale face grown suddenly paler, and her hand on her bosom, she could only exclaim, "Why, it 's Dr. Renton!" and stand, still and dumb, gazing with a frightened look at his face, whiter than her own. Whereupon Mrs. Flanagan came bolting out again, with wild eyes, and a sort of stupefied horror in her good, coarse, Irish features; and then, with some uncouth ejaculation, ran back, and was heard to tumble over something within, and tumble something else over in her fall, and gather herself up with a subdued howl, and subside.

"Mrs. Miller," began Dr. Renton, in a low, husky voice, glancing at her frightened face, "I hope you 'll be composed. I spoke to you very harshly and rudely to-night; but I really was not myself, — I was in anger, — and I ask your pardon. Please to overlook it all, and — but I will speak of this presently; now — I am a physician; will you let me look now at your sick child?"

He spoke hurriedly, but with evident sincerity. For a moment her lips faltered; then a slow

flush came up, with a quick change of expression on her thin, worn face, and, reddening to painful scarlet, died away in a deeper pallor.

"Dr. Renton," she said hastily, "I have no ill feeling for you, sir, and I know you were hurt and vexed; and I know you have tried to make it up to me again, sir, secretly. I know who it was, now; but I can't take it, sir. You must take it back. You know it was you sent it, sir?"

"Mrs. Miller," he replied, puzzled beyond measure, "I don't understand you. What do you mean?"

"Don't deny it, sir. Please not to," she said imploringly, the tears starting to her eyes. "I am very grateful, — indeed I am. But I can't accept it. Do take it again."

"Mrs. Miller," he replied, in a hasty voice, "what do you mean? I have sent you nothing, — nothing at all. I have, therefore, nothing to receive again."

She looked at him fixedly, evidently impressed by the fervor of his denial.

"You sent me nothing to-night, sir?" she asked doubtfully.

"Nothing at any time, nothing," he answered firmly.

It would have been folly to have disbelieved the truthful look of his wondering face, and she

turned away in amazement and confusion. There was a long pause.

"I hope, Mrs. Miller, you will not refuse any assistance I can render to your child," he said at length.

She started, and replied, tremblingly and confusedly, "No, sir; we shall be grateful to you, if you can save her;" and went quickly, with a strange abstraction on her white face, into the inner room. He followed her at once, and, hardly glancing at Mrs. Flanagan, who sat there in stupefaction, with her apron over her head and face, he laid his hat on a table, went to the bedside of the little girl, and felt her head and pulse. He soon satisfied himself that the little sufferer was in no danger, under proper remedies, and now dashed down a prescription on a leaf from his pocket-book. Mrs. Flanagan, who had come out from the retirement of her apron, to stare stupidly at him during the examination, suddenly bobbed up on her legs, with enlightened alacrity, when he asked if there was any one that could go out to the apothecary's, and said, "Sure I wull!" He had a little trouble to make her understand that the prescription, which she took by the corner, holding it away from her, as if it were going to explode presently, and staring at it upside down, was to be left — "*left*, mind you, Mrs. Flanagan — with

the apothecary — Mr. Flint — at the nearest corner — and he will give you some things, which you are to bring here." But she had shuffled off at last with a confident, "Yis, sur, — aw, I knoo," her head nodding satisfied assent, and her big thumb covering the note on the margin, "Charge to Dr. C. Renton, Bowdoin Street" (which, *I* know, could not keep it from the eyes of the angels!), and he sat down to await her return.

"Mrs. Miller," he said kindly, "don't be alarmed about your child. She is doing well; and, after you have given her the medicine Mrs. Flanagan will bring, you 'll find her much better to-morrow. She must be kept cool and quiet, you know, and she 'll be all right soon."

"Oh, Dr. Renton, I am very grateful," was the tremulous reply; "and we will follow all directions, sir. It is hard to keep her quiet, sir; we keep as still as we can, and the other children are very still; but the street is very noisy all the daytime and evening, sir, and" —

"I know it, Mrs. Miller. And I 'm afraid those people downstairs disturb you somewhat."

"They make some stir in the evening, sir; and it 's rather loud in the street sometimes, at night. The folks on the lower floors are troubled a good deal, they say."

Well they may be. Listen to the bawling

outside now, cold as it is. Hark! A hoarse group on the opposite sidewalk beginning a song, — "Ro-o-l on, sil-ver mo-o-n" — The silver moon ceases to roll in a sudden explosion of yells and laughter, sending up broken fragments of curses, ribald jeers, whoopings, and catcalls, high into the night air. "Ga-l-a-ng! Hi-hi! What ye-e-h *'bout!*"

"This is outrageous, Mrs. Miller. Where 's the watchman?"

She smiled faintly. "He takes one of them off occasionally, sir; but he 's afraid; they beat him sometimes." A long pause.

"Is n't your room rather cold, Mrs. Miller?" He glanced at the black stove, dimly seen in the outer room. "It is necessary to keep the rooms cool just now, but this air seems to me cold."

Receiving no answer, he looked at her, and saw the sad truth in her averted face.

"I beg your pardon," he said quickly, flushing to the roots of his hair. "I might have known, after what you said to me this evening."

"We had a little fire here to-day, sir," she said, struggling with the pride and shame of poverty; "but we have been out of firing for two or three days, and we owe the wharfman something now. The two boys picked up a few chips; but the poor children find it hard to get

them, sir. Times are very hard with us, sir; indeed they are. We 'd have got along better, if my husband's money had come, and your rent would have been paid " —

" Never mind the rent! — don't speak of that! " he broke in, with his face all aglow. " Mrs. Miller, I have n't done right by you, — I know it. Be frank with me. Are you in want of — have you — need of — food? "

No need of answer to that faintly stammered question. The thin, rigid face was covered from his sight by the worn, wan hands, and all the frigid truth of cold, hunger, anxiety, and sickened sorrow they had concealed had given way at last in a rush of tears. He could not speak. With a smitten heart, he knew it all now. Ah! Dr. Renton, you know these people's tricks? you know their lying blazon of poverty, to gather sympathy?

" Mrs. Miller," — she had ceased weeping, and as he spoke, she looked at him, with the tear-stains still on her agitated face, half ashamed that he had seen her, — " Mrs. Miller, I am sorry. This shall be remedied. Don't tell me it sha'n't! Don't! I say it shall! Mrs. Miller, I 'm — I 'm ashamed of myself. I am, indeed."

" I am very grateful, sir, I 'm sure," said she; " but we don't like to take charity, though we need help; but we can get along now, sir; for I

suppose I must keep it, as you say you did n't send it, and use it for the children's sake, and thank God for his good mercy, — since I don't know, and never shall, where it came from, now."

"Mrs. Miller," he said quickly, "you spoke in this way before; and I don't know what you refer to. What do you mean by — *it?*"

"Oh! I forgot, sir; it puzzles me so. You see, sir, I was sitting here after I got home from your house, thinking what I should do, when Mrs. Flanagan came upstairs with a letter for me, that she said a strange man left at the door for Mrs. Miller; and Mrs. Flanagan could n't describe him well, or understandingly; and it had no direction at all, only the man inquired who was the landlord, and if Mrs. Miller had a sick child, and then said the letter was for me; and there was no writing inside the letter, but there was fifty dollars. That 's all, sir. It gave me a great shock, sir; and I could n't think who sent it, only when you came to-night, I thought it was you; but you said it was n't, and I never shall know who it was, now. It seems as if the hand of God was in it, sir, for it came when everything was darkest, and I was in despair."

"Why, Mrs. Miller," he slowly answered, "this is very mysterious. The man inquired if

I was the owner of the house — oh! no — he only inquired who was — but then he knew I was the — oh! bother! I'm getting nowhere. Let 's see. Why, it must be some one you know, or that knows your circumstances."

"But there 's no one knows them but yourself, and I told you," she replied; "no one else but the people in the house. It must have been some rich person, for the letter was a gilt-edge sheet, and there was perfume in it, sir."

"Strange," he murmured. "Well, I give it up. All is, I advise you to keep it, and I 'm very glad some one did his duty by you in your hour of need, though I 'm sorry it was not myself. Here 's Mrs. Flanagan."

There was a good deal done, and a great burden lifted off an humble heart — nay, two! — before Dr. Renton thought of going home. There was a patient gained, likely to do Dr. Renton more good than any patient he had lost. There was a kettle singing on the stove, and blowing off a happier steam than any engine ever blew on that railroad whose unmarketable stock had singed Dr. Renton's fingers. There was a yellow gleam flickering from the blazing fire on the sober binding of a good old Book, upon a shelf with others, a rarer medical work than ever slipped at auction from Dr. Renton's hands, since it kept the sacred lore of Him who

healed the sick, and fed the hungry, and comforted the poor, and who was also the Physician of souls.

And there were other offices performed, of lesser range than these, before he rose to go. There were cooling mixtures blended for the sick child; medicines arranged; directions given; and all the items of her tendance orderly foreseen, and put in pigeon-holes of When and How, for service.

At last he rose to go. "And now, Mrs. Miller," he said, "I 'll come here at ten in the morning, and see to our patient. She 'll be nicely by that time. And (listen to those brutes in the street! — twelve o'clock, too — ah! there 's the bell), as I was saying, my offense to you being occasioned by your debt to me, I feel my receipt for your debt should commence my reparation to you; and I 'll bring it to-morrow. Mrs. Miller, you don't quite come at me; — what I mean is, — you owe me, under a notice to quit, three months' rent. Consider that paid in full. I never will take a cent of it from you, — not a copper. And I take back the notice. Stay in my house as long as you like, the longer the better. But, up to this date, your rent 's paid. There. I hope you 'll have as happy a Christmas as circumstances will allow, and I mean you shall."

A flush of astonishment, of indefinable emotion, overspread her face.

"Dr. Renton, stop, sir!" He was moving to the door. "Please, sir, *do* hear me! You are very good, — but I can't allow you to — Dr. Renton, we are able to pay you the rent, and we *will*, and we *must* — here — now. Oh, sir, my gratefulness will never fail to you, — but here — here — be fair with me, sir, and *do* take it."

She had hurried to a chest of drawers, and came back with the letter which she had rustled apart with eager, trembling hands, and now, unfolding the single banknote it had contained, she thrust it into his fingers as they closed.

"Here, Mrs. Miller," — she had drawn back with her arms locked on her bosom, and he stepped forward, — "no, no. This sha'n't be. Come, come, you must take it back. Good heavens!" He spoke low, but his eyes blazed in the red glow which broke out on his face, and the crisp note in his extended hand shook violently at her. "Sooner than take this money from you, I would perish in the street! What! Do you think I will rob you of the gift sent you by some one who had a human heart for the distresses I was aggravating? Sooner than — Here, take it! Oh, my God! what 's this?"

The red glow on his face went out, with this exclamation, in a pallor like marble, and he

jerked back the note to his starting eyes. Globe Bank — Boston — Fifty Dollars. For a minute he gazed at the motionless bill in his hand. Then, with his hueless lips compressed, he seized the blank letter from his astonished tenant, and looked at it, turning it over and over. Grained letter-paper — gilt-edged — with a favorite perfume in it. Where 's Mrs. Flanagan? Outside the door, sitting on the top of the stairs, with her apron over her head, crying. Mrs. Flanagan! Here! In she tumbled, her big feet kicking her skirts before her, and her eyes and face as red as a beet.

"Mrs. Flanagan, what kind of a looking man gave you this letter at the door to-night?"

"A-w, Docther Rinton, dawn't ax me! — Bother, an' all, an' sure an' I cud n't see him wud his fur-r hat, an' he a-ll boondled oop wud his co-at oop on his e-ars an' his big han'kershuf smotherin' thuh mouth uv him, an' sorra a bit uv him tuh be looked at, sehvin' thuh poomple on thuh ind uv his naws."

"The *what* on the end of his nose?"

"Thuh poomple, sur."

"What does she mean, Mrs. Miller?" said the puzzled questioner, turning to his tenant.

"I don't know, sir, indeed," was the reply. "She said that to me, and I could n't understand her."

"It 's thuh poomple, docther. Dawn't ye knoo? Thuh big, flehmin' poomple oop there." She indicated the locality by flattening the rude tip of her own nose with her broad forefinger.

"Oh! the pimple! I have it." So he had. Netty, Netty!

He said nothing, but sat down in a chair, with his bold, white brow knitted, and the warm tears in his dark eyes.

"You know who sent it, sir, don't you?" asked his wondering tenant, catching the meaning of all this.

"Mrs. Miller, I do. But I cannot tell you. Take it, now, and use it. It is doubly yours. There. Thank you."

She had taken it with an emotion in her face that gave a quicker motion to his throbbing heart. He rose to his feet, hat in hand, and turned away. The noise of a passing group of roysterers in the street without came strangely loud into the silence of that room.

"Good-night, Mrs. Miller. I 'll be here in the morning. Good-night."

"Good-night, sir. God bless you, sir!"

He turned around quickly. The warm tears in his dark eyes had flowed on his face, which was pale; and his firm lip quivered.

"I hope He will, Mrs. Miller, — I hope He will. It should have been said oftener."

He was on the outer threshold. Mrs. Flanagan had, somehow, got there before him, with a lamp, and he followed her down through the dancing shadows, with blurred eyes. On the lower landing he stopped to hear the jar of some noisy wrangle, thick with oaths, from the bar-room. He listened for a moment, and then turned to the staring stupor of Mrs. Flanagan's rugged visage.

"Sure, they 're at ut, docther, wud a wull," she said, smiling.

"Yes. Mrs. Flanagan, you 'll stay up with Mrs. Miller to-night, won't you?"

"Dade an' I wull, sur."

"That 's right. Do. And make her try and sleep, for she must be tired. Keep up a fire, — not too warm, you understand. There 'll be wood and coal coming to-morrow, and she 'll pay you back."

"A-w, docther, dawn't noo!"

"Well, well. And — look here; have you got anything to eat in the house? Yes; well, take it upstairs. Wake up those two boys, and give them something to eat. Don't let Mrs. Miller stop you. Make her eat something. Tell her I said she must. And, first of all, get your bonnet, and go to that apothecary's — Flint's — for a bottle of port wine, for Mrs. Miller. Hold on. There 's the order." (He had a leaf out

of his pocket-book in a minute, and wrote it down.) "Go with this the first thing. Ring Flint's bell, and he 'll wake up. And here 's something for your own Christmas dinner, to-morrow." Out of the roll of bills he drew one of the tens, — Globe Bank—Boston, — and gave it to Mrs. Flanagan.

"A-w, dawn't noo, docther."

"Bother! It 's for yourself, mind. Take it. There. And now unlock the door. That 's it. Good-night, Mrs. Flanagan."

"An' meh thuh Hawly Vurgin hape bless'n's on ye, Docther Rinton, wud a-ll thuh compliments uv thuh sehzin, for yur thuh" —

He lost the end of Mrs. Flanagan's parting benedictions in the moonlit street. He did not pause till he was at the door of the oyster-room. He paused then, to make way for a tipsy company of four, who reeled out, — the gaslight from the bar-room on the edges of their sodden, distorted faces, — giving three shouts and a yell, as they slammed the door behind them.

He pushed after a party that was just entering. They went at once for a drink to the upper end of the room, where a rowdy crew, with cigars in their mouths, and liquor in their hands, stood before the bar, in a knotty wrangle concerning some one who was killed. Where is the keeper? Oh, there he is, mixing hot brandy

punch for two! Here, you, sir, go up quietly, and tell Mr. Rollins Dr. Renton wants to see him. The waiter came back presently to say Mr. Rollins would be right along. Twenty-five minutes past twelve. Oyster trade nearly over. Gaudy-curtained booths on the left all empty but two. Oyster-openers and waiters — three of them in all — nearly done for the night, and two of them sparring and scuffling behind a pile of oysters on the trough, with the colored print of the great prize fight between Tom Hyer and Yankee Sullivan, in a veneered frame above them on the wall. Blower up from the fire opposite the bar, and stewpans and griddles empty and idle on the bench beside it, among the unwashed bowls and dishes. Oyster trade nearly over. Bar still busy.

Here comes Rollins in his shirt-sleeves, with an apron on. Thick-set, muscular man, — frizzled head, low forehead, sharp, black eyes, flabby face, with a false, greasy smile on it now, oiling over a curious, stealthy expression of mingled surprise and inquiry, as he sees his landlord here at this unusual hour.

"Come in here, Mr. Rollins; I want to speak to you."

"Yes, sir." "Jim" (to the waiter), "go and tend bar." They sat down in one of the booths, and lowered the curtain. Dr. Renton, at one

side of the table within, looking at Rollins, sitting leaning on his folded arms, at the other side.

"Mr. Rollins, I am told the man who was stabbed here last night is dead. Is that so?"

"Well, he is, Dr. Renton. Died this afternoon."

"Mr. Rollins, this is a serious matter; what are you going to do about it?"

"Can't help it, sir. Who 's a-goin' to touch *me?* Called in a watchman. Whole mess of 'em had cut. Who knows 'em? Nobody knows 'em. Man that was stuck never see the fellers as stuck him in all his life till then. Did n't know which one of 'em did it. Did n't know nothing. Don't now, an' never will, 'nless he meets 'em in hell. That 's all. Feller 's dead, an' who 's a-goin' to touch *me?* Can't do it. Ca-n-'t do it."

"Mr. Rollins," said Dr. Renton, thoroughly disgusted with this man's brutal indifference, "your lease expires in three days."

"Well, it does. Hope to make a renewal with you, Dr. Renton. Trade 's good here. Should n't mind more rent on, if you insist, — hope you won't, — if it 's anything in reason. Promise sollum, I sha'n't have no more fightin' in here. Could n't help this. Accidents *will* happen, yo' know."

"Mr. Rollins, the case is this: If you did n't sell liquor here, you 'd have no murder done in your place, — murder, sir. That man was murdered. It 's your fault and it 's mine, too. I ought not to have let you the place for your business. It *is* a cursed traffic, and you and I ought to have found it out long ago. *I* have. I hope *you* will. Now, I advise you, as a friend, to give up selling rum for the future; you see what it comes to, — don't you? At any rate, I will not be responsible for the outrages that are perpetrated in my building any more, — I will not have liquor sold here. I refuse to renew your lease. In three days you must move."

"Dr. Renton, you hurt my feelin's. Now, how would you" —

"Mr. Rollins, I have spoken to you as a friend, and you have no cause for pain. You must quit these premises when your lease expires. I 'm sorry I can't make you go before that. Make no appeals to me, if you please. I am fixed. Now, sir, good-night."

The curtain was pulled up, and Rollins rolled over to his beloved bar, soothing his lacerated feelings by swearing like a pirate, while Dr. Renton strode to the door, and went into the street, homeward.

He walked fast through the magical moonlight, with a strange feeling of sternness, and

tenderness, and weariness in his mind. In this mood, the sensation of spiritual and physical fatigue gaining on him, but a quiet moonlight in all his reveries, he reached his house. He was just putting his latch-key in the door, when it was opened by James, who stared at him for a second, and then dropped his eyes, and put his hand before his nose. Dr. Renton compressed his lips on an involuntary smile.

"Ah! James, you're up late. It's near one."

"I sat up for Mrs. Renton and the young lady, sir. They're just come, and gone up-stairs."

"All right, James. Take your lamp and come in here. I've got something to say to you." The man followed him into the library at once, with some wonder on his sleepy face.

"First, put some coal on that fire, and light the chandelier. I shall not go up-stairs to-night." The man obeyed. "Now, James, sit down in that chair." He did so, beginning to look frightened at Dr. Renton's grave manner.

"James," — a long pause, — "I want you to tell me the truth. Where did you go to-night? Come, I have found you out. Speak."

The man turned as white as a sheet, and looked wretched with the whites of his bulging eyes, and the great pimple on his nose awfully

distinct in the livid hue of his features. He was a rather slavish fellow, and thought he was going to lose his situation. Please not to blame him, for he, too, was one of the poor.

"Oh, Dr. Renton, excuse me, sir; I did n't mean doing any harm."

"James, my daughter gave you an undirected letter this evening; you carried it to one of my houses in Hanover Street. Is that true?"

"Ye-yes, sir. I could n't help it. I only did what she told me, sir."

"James, if my daughter told you to set fire to this house, what would you do?"

"I would n't do it, sir," he stammered, after some hesitation.

"You would n't? James, if my daughter ever tells you to set fire to this house, do it, sir! Do it. At once. Do whatever she tells you. Promptly. And I 'll back you."

James stared wildly at him, as he received this astonishing command. Dr. Renton was perfectly grave, and had spoken slowly and seriously. The man was at his wits' end.

"You 'll do it, James, — will you?"

"Ye-yes, sir, certainly."

"That 's right. James, you 're a good fellow. James, you 've got a wife and children, hav'n't you?"

"Yes, sir, I have; living in the country, sir. In Chelsea, over the ferry. For cheapness, sir."

"For cheapness, eh? Hard times, James? How is it?"

"Pretty hard, sir. Close, but toler'ble comfortable. Rub and go, sir."

"Rub and go. Ve-r-y well. Rub and go. James, I'm going to raise your wages — to-morrow. Generally, because you 're a good servant. Principally, because you carried that letter to-night when my daughter asked you. I sha'n't forget it. To-morrow, mind. And if I can do anything for you, James, at any time, just tell me. That 's all. Now, you 'd better go to bed. And a happy Christmas to you!"

"Much obliged to you, sir. Same to you and many of 'em. Good-night, sir." And with Dr. Renton's "good-night" he stole up to bed, thoroughly happy, and determined to obey Miss Renton's future instructions to the letter. The shower of golden light which had been raining for the last two hours had fallen even on him. It would fall all day to-morrow in many places, and the day after, and for long years to come. Would that it could broaden and increase to a general deluge, and submerge the world!

Now the whole house was still, and its master was weary. He sat there, quietly musing, feeling the sweet and tranquil presence near him. Now the fire was screened, the lights were out, save one dim glimmer, and he had lain down on

the couch with the letter in his hand, and slept the dreamless sleep of a child.

He slept until the gray dawn of Christmas day stole into the room, and showed him the figure of his friend, a shape of glorious light, standing by his side and gazing at him with large and tender eyes! He had no fear. All was deep, serene, and happy with the happiness of heaven. Looking up into that beautiful, wan face, — so tranquil, — so radiant; watching, with a childlike awe, the star-fire in those shadowy eyes; smiling faintly, with a great, unutterable love thrilling slowly through his frame, in answer to the smile of light that shone upon the phantom countenance; so he passed a space of time which seemed a calm eternity, till, at last, the communion of spirit with spirit — of mortal love with love immortal — was perfected, and the shining hands were laid on his forehead, as with a touch of air. Then the phantom smiled, and, as its shining hands were withdrawn, the thought of his daughter mingled in the vision. She was bending over him! The dawn, the room, were the same. But the ghost of Feval had gone out from earth, away to its own land!

"Father, dear father! Your eyes were open, and they did not look at me. There is a light on your face, and your features are changed! What is it, — what have you seen?"

"Hush, darling: here — kneel by me, for a little while, and be still. I have seen the dead."

She knelt by him, burying her awe-struck face in his bosom, and clung to him with all the fervor of her soul. He clasped her to his breast, and for minutes all was still.

"Dear child, good and dear child!"

The voice was tremulous and low. She lifted her fair, bright countenance, now convulsed with a secret trouble and dimmed with streaming tears, to his, and gazed on him. His eyes were shining; but his pallid cheeks, like hers, were wet with tears. How still the room was! How like a thought of solemn tenderness the pale gray dawn! The world was far away, and his soul still wandered in the peaceful awe of his dream. The world was coming back to him, — but oh! how changed! — in the trouble of his daughter's face.

"Darling, what is it? Why are you here? Why are you weeping? Dear child, the friend of my better days, — of the boyhood when I had noble aims, and life was beautiful before me, — he has been here! I have seen him. He has been with me — oh! for a good I cannot tell!"

"Father, dear father!" — he had risen and sat upon the couch, but she still knelt before him, weeping, and clasped his hands in hers, — "I thought of you and of this letter, all the

time, — all last night till I slept, and then I dreamed you were tearing it to pieces, and trampling on it. I awoke, and lay thinking of you, and of ——. And I thought I heard you come down-stairs, and I came here to find you. But you were lying here so quietly, with your eyes open, and so strange a light on your face. And I knew, — I knew you were dreaming of him, and that you saw him, for the letter lay beside you. Oh, father! forgive me, but do hear me! In the name of this day, — it 's Christmas day, father, — in the name of the time when we must both die, — in the name of that time, father, hear me! That poor woman last night, — Oh, father! forgive me, but don't tear that letter in pieces and trample it under foot! You know what I mean — you know — you know. Don't tear it, and tread it under foot! "

She clung to him, sobbing violently, her face buried in his hands.

" Hush, hush! It 's all well, — it 's all well. Here, sit by me. So. I have " — His voice failed him, and he paused. But, sitting by him, — clinging to him, — her face hidden in his bosom, — she heard the strong beating of his disenchanted heart.

" My child, I know your meaning. I will not tear the letter to pieces and trample it under foot. God forgive me my life's slight to those

words. But I learned their value last night, in the house where your blank letter had entered before me."

She started, and looked into his face steadfastly, while a bright scarlet shot into her own.

"I know all, Netty, — all. Your secret was well kept, but it is yours and mine now. It was well done, darling, well done. Oh, I have been through strange mysteries of thought and life since that starving woman sat here! Well — thank God!"

"Father, what have you done?" The flush had failed, but a glad color still brightened her face, while the tears stood trembling in her eyes.

"All that you wished yesterday," he answered. "And all that you ever could have wished, henceforth I will do."

"Oh, father!" She stopped. The bright scarlet shot again into her face, but with an April shower of tears and the rainbow of a smile.

"Listen to me, Netty, and I will tell you, and only you, what I have done." Then, while she mutely listened, sitting by his side, and the dawn of Christmas broadened into Christmas day, he told her all.

And when he had told all, and emotion was stilled, they sat together in silence for a time, she with her innocent head drooped upon his

shoulder and her eyes closed, lost in tender and mystic reveries; and he musing with a contrite heart. Till at last the stir of daily life began to waken in the quiet dwelling, and without, from steeples in the frosty air, there was a sound of bells.

They rose silently, and stood, clinging to each other, side by side.

"Love, we must part," he said gravely and tenderly. "Read me, before we go, the closing lines of George Feval's letter. In the spirit of this let me strive to live. Let it be for me the lesson of the day. Let it also be the lesson of my life."

Her face was pale and lit with exaltation as she took the letter from his hand. There was a pause, and then upon the thrilling and tender silver of her voice, the words arose like solemn music: —

"Farewell — farewell! But, oh! take my counsel into memory on Christmas Day, and forever. Once again, the ancient prophecy of peace and good-will shines on a world of wars and wrongs and woes. Its soft ray shines into the darkness of a land wherein swarm slaves, poor laborers, social pariahs, weeping women, homeless exiles, hunted fugitives, despised aliens, drunkards, convicts, wicked children, and Magdalens unredeemed. These are but the ghastliest figures in that sad army of humanity which

advances, by a dreadful road, to the Golden Age of the poets' dream. These are your sisters and your brothers. Love them all. Beware of wronging one of them by word or deed. Oh, friend! strong in wealth for so much good, — take my last counsel. In the name of the Saviour, I charge you, be true and tender to mankind. Come out from Babylon into manhood, and live and labor for the fallen, the neglected, the suffering, and the poor. Lover of arts, customs, laws, institutions, and forms of society, love these things only as they help mankind! With stern love, overturn them, or help to overturn them, when they become cruel to a single — the humblest — human being. In the world's scale, social position, influence, public power, the applause of majorities, heaps of funded gold, services rendered to creeds, codes, sects, parties, or federations, — they weigh weight; but in God's scale — remember! — on the day of hope, remember! — your least service to Humanity outweighs them all."

THE BRAZEN ANDROID.

"He (Roger Bacon) enter'd into the depth of *Mechanical Sciences*, and was so well acquainted with the force of *Elastick* bodies, that in imitation of *Archytas*, who contrived a *wooden Dove* which cou'd fly, He, as we are told, cou'd make a flying Chariot, and had an art of putting Statues in motion, and producing articulate sounds out of a *Brazen Head:* and this not by any *Magical* power, but by one much superior, that of Phylosophy and Nature, which can do such things, to use his own expressions, as the ignorant think *Miracles*." — *Freind's History of Physic.* 1726.

Friars Bacon and Bungy, wishing to know how to wall England against invasion, summoned a devil, who told them to make a Brazen Head, with the organism of the human head, which must be watched till it spoke, but would reward their vigils with the information. The friars made the Head, watched it till overpowered with fatigue, and retired to sleep, leaving it in charge of their man, Miles, with orders to waken them if it said anything. Presently, the Head said at successive intervals, "Time is," "Time was," and "Time is passed." The clown judged the speeches too unimportant to waken the friars for, but with the last came a storm of thunder and lightning, the Head was shattered to pieces, and the experiment came to nothing. — See Thome's *Early English Romances*, Godwin's *Necromancers*, *etc.*

WHO can rebuild before the eye of the mind a single ordinary dwelling of the vanished London of the middle of the thirteenth century? It

was a dwarfish, squalid structure, of such crazy unsubstantiality that, with a stout iron crook and two strong cords, provided by the ward, it might be pulled down and dragged off speedily in case of fire ; a structure of one story jutting over a low ground floor, with another jut of eaves above, its roof perchance engrailed with gables, its front bearing an odd resemblance to the back of a couple of huge stairs, and the whole a most rickety, tumble-down, top-heavy, fantastical thing. Chimneys were fairly in vogue then, so it had them, squat, square, wide-mouthed, faced with white plaster, red tiles, or gray pebble-work. Red tiles covered its roof ; its walls were of rough-planed planks, or a wooden frame-work filled with a composite of straw and clay, buttressed with posts, and crossed this way and that with supporting beams, — the whole daubed over with whitewash, of which the weather soon made graywash. In front was a stairway, sometimes covered, sometimes not, or a step-ladder set slantwise against the wall, for an entrance to the upper story. The doorways were narrow and low, the windows also ; and the latter, darkened with overbrows of wooden shutters, propped up from beneath, and sticking out like long, slender awnings, were further darkened by sashes of parchment, linen, or thin-shaven horn, for glass came from Flanders, and was costly and rare.

Such, joint and seam and tile being loosened into crack and cranny and crevice everywhere, was the dwelling of the London citizen as the eye might see it in the middle of the thirteenth century. Multiply that dwelling into a tortuous and broken perspective of like buildings, some joined by party-walls, some with spaces between, all pent-roofed or gable-peaked, heavy-eaved, stub-chimneyed, narrow-latticed, awning-shuttered, stair-cased, post-buttressed, beam-crossed, dusky-red-roofed, dingy-white-walled, and low under the overhanging vastness of the sky, and you have an ancient London street, which shall be foul and narrow, with open drains, footways roughly flagged and horseway deep with slushy mire, overstrewn with ashes, shards, and offal, and smelling abominably. There were, indeed, at that period, thinly interspersed here and there, houses of somewhat better description, solidly built of stone and timber, though at best strangely deficient in comfort and convenience, according to the fashion of that most inconvenient and uncomfortable age. Here and there, too, for those were the times of the feudal soldier and priest, rose in dreadful-beauteous contrast with the squalid city the architectural grandeurs of church and cathedral, or the stately house or palace of bishop or earl. But all around stretched dwellings which our poorest

modern house excels, and on those dwellings all evils and discomforts that can befall had their quarry.

Light came dim, and sunshine dimly glimmering, into their darkened rooms. Summer heats made ovens of them. The old gray family of London fogs rose from the marshes north of the city walls, from the city's intersecting rivulets, from the Thames below, and crept in at every opening to make all dank and chill within. Down their squat chimneys swept the smoke, choking and blinding. Rains such as even rainy England knows not now soaked them through for weeks together. Cold, such as English winters have forgotten now, pierced with griping blast and silent-sifting snow to their shivering inmates. Foul exhalations from the filthy streets hung around them an air of poison, or, rising from the cesspools, of which every house had one within, discharged themselves in deadly maladies. Lightnings stabbed their roofs or rent their walls, hunting for those they sheltered. Conflagration, lurking in a spark, upspread in dragonish flame, and roared through them devouring. Whirlwind swept through them howling, and tossed them down by fifties. Pestilence breathed through them in recurring seasons, and left their rooms aghast with corpses. Civic riot or intestine war stormed often near

them, and brought them death and sorrow. Famine arose every few years, and walked through them on his way through England, leaving their tenants lean and pale or lifeless. Often into them broke the midnight robber, single or in gangs; often to them came the gatherer of taxes or of tithes; upon them hung perpetually all the bloodsuckers, every vampire which an age of ignorance and tyranny could spawn; and in them herded low lusts and passions, fiendish bigotries, crazy superstitions, brutish illiteracy, and all that darkens and depraves the soul. For that was the mournful midnight of our mortal life, centuries ago. The old, sad stars that governed our conditions still kept their forceful station above the brawl of brutal and infernal dreams; and one alone, new risen from Geber's east, hung dewy bright with the world's hope and promise, while Science, builder of life that is holy, beautiful, and gay, was but a wondrous new-born child in Roger Bacon's cell, dreaming of things to come.

On the throne, meantime, was a crowned horse-leech, Henry the Third, familiarly called Harry of Winchester, — beggar and robber in one, the main thought of whose weak and base reign was how to drain by a million mean sluices the wealth of his subjects; and in London, as in all England, taxmen, thieves, fogs, rain, heat,

cold, miasma, lightning, fire, whirlwind, pestilence, riot, war, and famine performed their effects again on them through him. Under the feudal system, society and government cost dear: the rich, having much, paid immensely; the poor, having little, paid much; the general wealth bled constantly at every vein; and now, increasing the profuse depletion to unbearable extents, was this artery-draining king. At his marriage, his messengers swarmed out from his presence, through city, town, and country, and begged money; at the birth of his son, out again, and begged money; at New Year and other festival times, again, and begged money; on all possible occasions and upon any pretext, out they went, and begged money; and between whiles, among abbots, friars, clerks, tradesmen, and lower orders generally, Henry himself went, personally begging money. All along he was exacting heavy toll from the poor fishers of the coasts for every seine they dragged to land; sending his justices out upon their circuits to collect for him immense sums by compounding offenses with rogues; confiscating the wealth of men who had chanced to encroach upon his forest borders; borrowing large amounts from cities and towns, and never returning them; plundering without mercy the rich Jews, whom everybody plundered, and even selling them out-

right to the king of the Romans, when he was in want of a wealthy Israelite to rob. On one occasion, when the abbots of the downs were not willing to ruin themselves by giving him a year's value of their wool, he ruined them by forbidding its exportation; more than once he shut up the shops and stopped the entire traffic of towns and cities, to force the traders to sell their goods only at the fairs he instituted, where, for that privilege, they must pay him large duties; on flimsy allegations or for slight faults he drew heavy fines from citizens, and even sent his bailiffs to pounce upon shops, and seize clothes, food, and wine for his household. Such were the devices by which he increased his own lawful annual revenue of forty thousand pounds sterling, all which he lavished in luxurious uses or on his host of idle courtiers, many of them foreigners from Poitou and Picardy, whom the people hated. In these beggaries and burglaries he was encouraged by his equally rapacious wife, Queen Eleanor; and not only encouraged, but assisted, by the papal harpy of that period, Innocent the Fourth, who, besides filling all vacant English benefices with profligate Italian priests and even boys, abstracted every few years, by way of tithes, about a million pounds sterling.

London, especially, then the great commer-

cial port of the realm, and rich despite its coarse and meagre life and squalid aspect, was the prime object of the king's extortions. An inexhaustible well of riches he called it, and into that well, as an historian has said, he dipped his bucket freely. The consequence was that between him and the twenty thousand sturdy and turbulent little citizens there were deadly rancor and perpetual feud; for his operations were not only essentially outrageous, but in flagrant violation of the rights and liberties secured the citizens in the Great Charter which the barons and clergy had wrung from the preceding tyrant, John, at Runnymede. The great mass of the English people shared the exasperation of the London burgesses. Even the villans, or chattel slaves, — and a large portion of the people were in that condition, — themselves grievous sufferers by their own lords, had their little scrap of protection from the Charter, and were concerned at its violation. Against the king, too, was a large proportion of the barons and clergy of this reign, men who smarted pecuniarily by the frequent miseries his perpetual interference with trade and agriculture brought upon the realm, and whose chartered rights and privileges were often directly or indirectly invaded or nullified by his rapacity and prodigality. These, having stormed at the mon-

arch year after year in vain, were now proceeding to serious action.

Foremost among them was one great statesman, — he who claims, by the common judgment of the time, the proud distinction the Norman song of that period accords him of being just for the pure love of justice, — Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, brother-in-law to the king, and a Frenchman born and bred, but English heart-of-oak to his soul's core, and the darling of the English people. Already the popular mind, naming him the gift of the Lord to England, had fixed upon him as the champion of the people's cause; and already, at his instance, the barons and clergy in Parliament at Oxford had revived a provision of the Charter of Runnymede, by which the direction of affairs was taken from the exclusive hand of the king, and entrusted to a Committee of Government, twelve being appointed by the monarch, twelve by the Parliament. But the measure was only a partial check to the royal horse-leech. The abuses, somewhat diminished, still continued, and still against the king and his creatures the anger of London and of England was swelling and roaring, higher and louder, year by year, on and on, to the tornado fury of civil war.

In these times and in that old London, a

street such as we have described, known as Friar's Street, and inhabited chiefly by sailors, foreign traders whose business kept them much of the time on the wide waters, fishermen, and the like, stretched its irregular perspective parallel with and not far from the Thames. The time was toward the latter part of July. A brief though violent thunder-storm which had raged over the city was passing away; but still, though the rain had ceased more than an hour before, wild piles of dark and coppery clouds, in which a fierce and rayless glow was laboring, gigantically overhung the grotesque and huddled vista of dwarf houses, while in the distance, sheeting high over the low, misty confusion of gables and chimneys, spread a pall of dead, leprous blue, suffused with blotches of dull, glistening yellow, and with black plague-spots of vapor floating and faint lightnings crinkling on its surface. Thunder, still muttering in the close and sultry air, kept the scared dwellers in the street within, behind their closed shutters; and all deserted, cowed, dejected, squalid, like poor, stupid, top-heavy things that had felt the wrath of the summer tempest, stood the drenched structures on either side of the narrow and crooked way, ghastly and picturesque under the giant canopy. Rain dripped wretchedly in slow drops of melancholy sound from their projecting eaves

upon the broken flagging, lay there in pools or trickled into the swollen drains, where the fallen torrent sullenly gurgled on its way to the river. In the centre of the fetid street — a deep and serpentine canal of mud, undulating here and there into little lakes of standing water, overstrewn in places with ash-heaps, scattered shards and fishbones, and dully glistering in the swarthy light from the clouds — seven or eight unwieldy swine, belonging to St. Antony's Hospital, whose pigs alone were privileged, out of regard for the saint, to roam the city, waddled and rooted lazily, with their neck-bells continually jingling. Other sounds and forms than these there were none.

A little while, however, and, the beldam thunder having died away into faint and distant guttural mumblings, shutters began to uplift and doors to open, one by one; and in the same order shabby figures in vivid dresses of blue, red, yellow, or striped stuffs, mostly of housewives, with here and there a man among them in short tunic and hose of the same colors, appeared at the apertures, peering timorously at the wild sky and then at the street below. Gradually the clacking and clattering of opening doors and shutters became general; the figures multiplied rapidly; children of all sizes, in bright-hued smocks, shock-headed and bare-legged, began to

swarm down the stairways and out upon the flagging; and the street echoed with a clamor of voices, speaking and replying from all quarters.

While this neighborly hubbub was going on, there was a sudden lurid brightening of the swarthy light from the clouds; and at the same moment, as if the effect had wrought the change, voices were shrilling, people down the street gesticulating and running, a movement like an electric shock shot along, and at once, inexplicably, amidst an inarticulate roaring murmur like a coming sea, all voices were raised in screaming tumultuation, and everybody flew hither and thither in confusion. St. Antony's swine, confounded by this explosion, stopped rooting, and stood belly-deep in mud, ears laid forward and every snout pointed down the street, into which, from a side avenue, a multitude, mostly of women, were now irregularly pouring, hardly turning their faces from the direction in which they had come to glance at the mire, through which they scrambled, with upheld skirts, up to the opposite flagging, and never ceasing to hoot and gesticulate at something as yet invisible. The next moment came a straggle of boys, furiously yelling and flinging handfuls of mud; and then bursting through them came three young men, courtiers at the first glance, with the many-hued

flowerage of their short gowns and the gay colors of their silken hoods and hose and mantles almost obscured with the mire which covered them from head to foot. With flushed and frightened dirt-bespattered faces, they sprang upon the footway with brandished poniards, and ran desperately up the street amidst a deafening din. Away cluttered the swine before them, squealing and jingling, and then turning, as pigs will, just the way they should not have turned, floundered into the crowd of following boys and on to the pavement; upsetting boys, girls, men, and women in all directions, and increasing the general rage and confusion. For a moment, involved in this new imbroglio, two prentices, — one a lank fellow in belted russet tunic, the other short and fat in blue, — who had burst around the corner with cudgels, close upon the heels of the flying courtiers, lost sight of them, but, presently emerging into clearer space, saw them again as they raced over the flagging.

"Run, Little Turstan! Hep! hep!" shouted the lank one, setting off in pursuit.

"Hep! hep!" panted Little Turstan, putting his bandy legs into comically active motion again.

But the three courtiers were already some distance off, and after a short run the two pren-

tices stopped, and gazed, panting and gasping, with drooping cudgels, after their lost prey. Both of them were small in stature, as the men of that day mostly were, and beardless; both had the yellow locks and pig faces of the Saxon; and the lank one had run himself white, while his fat companion was blowzed fiery-red with his exertions, and purblind into the bargain.

For a half minute or so they stood, the first absorbed in his hungry outlook, the other looking also, but with the air of one too hot and breathless to see anything clearly, or to care about seeing it, and both regardless of the tumult they had left behind them. Suddenly the lank fellow wheeled about, bringing his cudgel down thump upon the stones, and, throwing back his head, opened his big mouth wide for the purpose of belching forth some tremendous imprecation; in which attitude he remained, like one unexpectedly petrified, staring straight before him. Just then, from the side avenue below, the street filled with perhaps a hundred figures, prentices and courtiers, intermingled in a stabbing and striking snarl, their shouts and oaths sounding amidst a Babel clamor of hooting and screaming from the excited concourse on the footways. But the staring prentice was apparently oblivious of the spectacle, and Little Turstan, who had followed his motion to this

strange conclusion, looked up at him with hot, bleared eyes in stupid wonderment.

"Hey, Wynkin, what now?" he gasped, panting and blowing.

Without closing his mouth, Wynkin rolled his eyes down sideways upon the face upturned to his, and, with a vacant and dazed air, made a slow motion with his thumb. Quite as slowly Little Turstan turned his eyes in the direction indicated, and saw, not far from them, a strong, columnar figure in red hose and gray mantle, standing on the flagging in the attitude of one who had paused in coming up the street to look back upon the brawl, with his face concealed by the mantle's hood, the edges of which he held together with one hand. Little Turstan gaped at him for a minute; then, not knowing what else to do, grasped his cudgel, and looked at Wynkin as asking whether the stranger was to be set upon.

"I spied his face," murmured Wynkin wonderingly.

"Whose, then?" demanded his companion.

"Whose think you, now?"

"Nay, but that I do not know, Wynkin."

"As I am a living man, Turstan" — asseverated Wynkin, turning to his comrade with an eager and mysterious air, and speaking in a low voice.

"Ay" —

"By Becket, may I never see grace if it was not" —

"Who?"

Wynkin's eyes sparkled, and, with an air at once consequential, patronizing, important, and reverential, he put one hand over his mouth and bent his face down to Little Turstan's ear.

"Sir Simon the Righteous!" he pompously murmured, straightening with an air of triumph the moment he had spoken. The one quick thing about Little Turstan was instinct, and instinctively, upon hearing the name which the popular love had bestowed upon the great earl, he put up his hand to remove his cap, but found that, like his companion, he was bareheaded. The object of this reverential movement had evidently heard Wynkin's answer, though the prentice had spoken in a low voice, for he started slightly, and drew his hood closer together.

"Whist — mum, Little Turstan," whispered Wynkin; "affect not to know him, for he would not be here with hooded face, and never a follower at his back, if he wished not to be secret. Whist, now, he comes."

As he said the last words the personage advanced, with his veiled face turned toward the comrades, who at once louted low.

"What means yon brawl, good fellows?"

asked he, in a grave, sonorous voice, whose French accent confirmed the assertion Wynkin's glimpse of his features had prompted.

Little Turstan sheepishly shambled behind his comrade, but the latter, though a little startled at becoming suddenly aware that the fight in which he had been engaged some distance off but just before was transferred now to the street in which he stood, bent humbly to the stately figure before him, and answered at once like a fellow who had his wits about him.

"They be the king's men, most worshipful," he said. "May it please you, most worshipful, yon masters, to the number of some forty or so, did take their pleasure in our streets, and lest their silken gear be wet in the storm they sought their refuge in the shops. So till the foul weather overpassed, when, lo and behold you, most worshipful, up spake one of nine to little Turstan here, saying, 'Scurvy wretch, our liege king would have pipkins of the potter,' — he being the potter's prentice, most worshipful, and the potter away from home. 'Pipkins he shall have if he pay; not else,' quoth Little Turstan. 'Here be the pay, scurvy wretch,' quoth the king's man, and throws one pipkin at Little Turstan, and yet another at his fellow-prentice, Thomas. 'Ye do ill, masters, to break the potter's ware,' quoth Little Turstan. 'We do well.

soapy and scurvy wretch,' quoth the king's man. Whereat the nine lay hands on the large table whereon are many pipkins, the which they overturn, and all the pipkins are broken. Then stoutly cries Little Turstan, 'Prentice, prentice!' and to the shop enter the other king's men, and break pipkins, and go out down Lombard Street merrily laughing. After them sally our prentices, most worshipful, and say, 'Ye shall go with us and answer for the wrong ye have wrought.' To which the king's men say, 'Ye are all scurvy and soapy wretches, and we will not go with ye, nor yet answer.' So drawing their gully-knives upon us, we set upon them with our staves; and three among those nine running from the rest, Little Turstan and I give chase, till we lose them in Friar's Street, where the others now are, as I see, most worshipful."

To this narrative of what had happened (of which our version must be considered a sort of translation, for Wynkin spoke in the uncouth Anglo-Saxon of the period, a language wholly unintelligible to us now, and such as we might fancy a horse would naturally speak, could he speak at all) the stranger listened in perfect silence, though it was easy to see, by the nervous griping of the hand holding the hood together, that he fully understood and was moved by the story of one of those outrages frequently com-

mitted in that day by the king's creatures, and the common end of which was a heavy fine levied upon the citizens. Whether he would have made any reply is doubtful, but if he intended any it was cut short by a nudge Little Turstan gave Wynkin from behind, which, with the uneasy glance accompanying it, caused the latter to take notice of the spot where they happened to be standing. It was in front of a structure of stone, not very high, but considerably higher than the other edifices; withdrawn somewhat from the zigzag line of the street; dusky brown in color, and showing by the smoky stains and scars upon it that it had been scathed by, and probably proved a barrier to, some of those conflagrations which so often then ravaged London; its narrow windows closely shuttered; a loophole in the form of a cross between the two in the upper story; a sombre portal jutting beneath, with a carven finial, and on its cornice floral carvings; within this an oaken door heavily clamped with iron; on either side of the portal, set in niches, two wooden effigies of St. Francis d'Assisi and St. Thomas à Becket; and weeds and grass raggedly fringing the overhanging eaves, growing thickly around the broken steps and spiring from their seams and fissures. Sooth to say, it was a building before which nobody, from the child at his

games to the very oldest citizen, cared even in broad daylight to linger; though people did venture to live, and even to frequent the flagging, on the opposite side. The explanation of this popular timidity was, that in the stone house abode then, as for a year past, a learned man; and a learned man at that delightful period was regarded by the populace with reverential horror, as one who was unquestionably a master of black arts and a dealer with the devil. When, therefore, Wynkin became aware that he was in front of the house, he turned a shade paler, and devoutly crossed himself, as Little Turstan had already done. No sooner had both prentices caught sight of a pale and bearded face calmly looking from a half-opened shutter above upon the fray — the face of the learned man himself — than they both crossed themselves again, and involuntarily made a movement to depart. Instantly the hooded personage passed by them with a slight bend of his head, the face at the window above disappearing at the same time, and the two prentices hurried off, and were presently striking and shouting in the midst of the brawl.

In front of the portal the personage paused to look back. As he turned, out smote from the clouds a burst of sunshine, blinding bright. The white walls and the wet red roofs suddenly

a-smoke with rising vapor; the chimneys, jutting fronts and eaves, propped shutters, stairways, all salient points and surfaces, streaked, splashed, and fringed with the sombre silver and sullen jewels of the rain; the street's black-shining slush, the flagging's leaden pools; the many-colored multitude swaying and tossing in one wild, howling bray of discord beyond; the motley mire-bedraggled fighters reeling and plunging, with flailing of cudgels and flashing of poniards, like a cluster of dwarf devils in interstruggling confusion, — the whole long, low, stormy vista, dashed with a thousand rough lights and sooty shadows, and showing like some gorgeous and demoniac phantasmagoria, swept up to meet the eye of the gazer. All was distinct in flame and gloom, under the lowering and tremendous rack, whose yellow and umber masses, riven into terrific forms, toiled gigantically to the far limit, where, losing shape, they sheeted down the vault through intermediate gray in dense and livid blue. A new life seemed to strike into the multitude with that abrupt and stern illumination; the whole concourse wavered convulsively, with brandished arms and hoarse and furious cries; the struggling mass of fighters plunged heavily forward, all together, swayed back again, and fought with frantic yells. Then came a chorus of shrill screams;

there was a sudden scattering; the vivid light went out, obscured in blotting clouds; and in the pallid shadow which struck the street blank and ghast the dispersing crowd was seen runing in affrighted silence, the people scrambling up stairways and in at doors, the prentices darting into the spaces between the houses, while through the multitudinous muffled clatter of footfalls sounded the dull and heavy gallop of approaching horse; and as the city guard came riding in, there were visible only twos and threes of miry prentices in different directions, vanishing into the interspaces with wounded comrades between them, and some distance down the street a draggled group of courtiers hastily retreating, with sore bones, toward Westminster.

"God's curse on king and king's men!" said the hooded witness of the scene, stamping his foot passionately on the flagging. He said no more, but, hastily entering the portal, struck twice on the oaken door. After a pause, the door swung slowly back a little way on its creaking hinges, and revealed in the shadowy aperture a dwarfish and hideously misshapen figure, clad in red, with a stolid and sodden face and a shock of yellow hair.

"Make way, good Cuthbert Hoole," said the visitor kindly. "I would see the friar."

Cuthbert Hoole kept his bloodshot eyes,

almost vacant of intelligence, fixed for a moment on the speaker's face, and then, in a feeble and dissonant tone, whined slowly : —

" Time is ! Come."

Like one accustomed to the strange manner of the poor idiot, the visitor entered, and following with calm strides the darting and zigzag course of his usher, was conducted through an obscure, low-browed passage to a small and lofty oaken chamber, palely lighted by a narrow oriel window with glass panes, set rather high in the wall. It was furnished with two huge wooden chairs, a settle, and a massive table, on which were a book of vellum, an inkhorn, and a few rolls of parchment. A spare and slender figure, gowned in gray Franciscan frieze, with the cowl laid back on his shoulders, stood near the table, and turned toward the visitor, as he entered, a face of scholastic pallor, meagre and noble, its lower part covered with a close-curling auburn beard, and its thin, clear features wearing in their shadow a faint smile which shed a pale irradiation under the hollow arches of the eyes, and over the unwrinkled marble of a forehead grand and large in its proportions, from which time and thought had worn away the monastic tonsure.

" Welcome, my lord of Leicester," said he, bending his head slightly.

"Thanks, marvelous doctor, I greet you," replied the earl. "But no court fashions of speech with me. By God's eyes, I weary alike of court and court fashions!"

He strode forward as he spoke, his presence seeming to flood the cloistral tranquillity of the chamber with a sense of embattled armies, and, throwing himself into a chair, flung back his hood. A kingly fronted presence, making the seat he sat upon a throne; the face bronzed and martial, stern, sagacious, royal with justice, passionate and war-sad; the large head, broad at top, and covered with curling locks of iron-gray, rising grandly from the solid shoulders; the bold forehead corrugated; the brown eyes filled with a clear fire under their pented brows, though veiled with a certain weariness as they wandered listlessly over the manuscripts on the table; the nose large, aquiline, courageous, with dilated nostrils; and the heavy black mustache of the Norman, sloping down to the resolute jaw. Over the whole countenance now was an expression of vexed gloom. The friar smiled pensively as he gazed upon it.

"You are fretted, De Montfort," he said.

"Fretted!" replied the earl, smiting his breast with his clenched hand. "Ay, Roger, fretted. Splendor of God, well may I be fretted! To be rid of this cark and care of state, I could become a shepherd of the downs."

"Then would you be fretted with the shepherd's cark and care," returned the friar jestingly.

The earl looked grim for a moment, but, soothed by the sweet, clear voice, like the falling of silver waters, as by the strengthful calm of the friar's presence, he smiled slowly, and then laughed.

"True, marvelous doctor, true," he said carelessly, his front relaxing. "All estates must have their crosses. Even you, Roger, with your worn face of peace, have borne burdens."

"Yes," said the friar simply, after a pause, "I have suffered."

De Montfort's mind, already roving from the thoughts that disturbed him, at once lost sight of them; his careless mood became fixed with sudden interest, and his eyes shot a keen glance at the musing face of the speaker, then wandered to the book on the table, and returned.

"I understand," he said slowly, moving his head up and down with the air of one occupied with a reflection which had never struck him before. "Yes, I have heard that Roger Bacon seeks too devoutly the mysteries of God to be loved by man. But why seek science at such cost?"

"Science is for man's advantage," replied Bacon gravely.

"For man's advantage? True, but it brings you sorrow, Roger."

"And you, De Montfort, — why toil you for justice against court and king and factious peers?"

"It is for England's welfare."

"But it brings you gall and grief, De Montfort."

"God's throat, yes!" the earl wrathfully assented, striking the arm of his chair. "Gall and grief it brings me, truly! Yet better gall and grief to me than ruin to the realm; better anything than shameful sloth of mine when wrongs cry for man to right them."

"Amen, brave earl! You have answered for me."

De Montfort looked mutely at him for a moment, and, with curious wish to know if such were indeed the motive of the great friar, spoke on.

"Yet hear me, Roger," he said, "and mark the difference between us twain. Behold, I have many recompenses. I am Earl of Leicester. From Kenilworth I look on broad lands of mine own. I have my good dame, the Lady Eleanor, and my stout sons. And what though royal Harry rage, and William de Valence scowl, and Gloucester's faction chafe me? Good prelates bless me; bold barons are leal to me, and hail

me champion and leader. Ay, more, — the people love me. They call me the Mattathias of the suffering land. They call me Sir Simon the Righteous. Is it not worth sorrow to have won such names as these? Sweet is the love of the people, Roger! But you," he pursued, his voice sinking from its proud tone to one of frank compassion, — "what are your recompenses? You are not now, as once, the glory of the university. Your voice is silenced there. You have no longer wealth. It has been spent for science. The friars of your order vent their malice and envy in the foulest calumnies upon you. The people do not love, but dread you. You are unblessed, unhonored, landless, wifeless, childless, almost friendless. Often in past time, as I have heard, your studies have been forbidden, your books and writings nailed together; you have been denied company, scanted of food and drink, imprisoned. To what good end? Why forego ease, joy, honor, for this? Why toil for science when it brings you nought but hate, slander, ill fame, oppression, poverty, hunger, imprisonment, perchance death?"

The friar raised his noble head, with a rapt light upon his wasted features.

"It is for the advantage of the world," he said, with sublime simplicity.

De Montfort looked at him with parted lips,

and a red flush crept over his massive countenance.

"The advantage of the world!" he rejoined, abstractedly and slowly. "That is a sorry voice to give a man cheer and comfort when all human voices cry against him."

"It is the voice divine," returned the friar, "and it never leaves me. I hear it," he said, with dreamful and solemn ardor, "when all human voices cry against me, — voice of their voices, and of their tones the overtone. Day never rose nor set, night never came nor silence never folded me, in which it was not Heaven's own voice of comfort to my spirit. Yea, jailed in my cell, wasted with prison rigors, when angry faces gnash at me, when cruel tongues rail at me, I hear it still, blithe and strong as battle trumpets, and bracing my heart to bear whatever man hath borne. Blithe and strong as in the early days at Ilchester, when it bade me yield up the lily and the rose of youth, the honors and the ease of age, so blithe and strong and filled with cheer and comfort do I hear it now. So shall I hear it, all sufficient, to my latest day; so shall I hear it on my dying pallet as I go to Him who also strove for the world's advantage, following whom I have labored to raise man's life to the perfection of the Christian law, in something of whose spirit I have humbly striven

to live, and somewhat of whose crown of thorns I have been graciously permitted to wear."

Ceasing, he stood with solemn light upon his face, and silence such as follows religious music succeeded to his voice when its last rapt cadences had died away. The flush had paled from De Montfort's features, and mutely for a little while, with the fire of his brown eyes dim, he gazed at the friar.

"O life of God," he passionately murmured, "who would not be noble in England with such a man as this alive!"

"What say you, De Montfort?" abstractedly asked Bacon, hearing his murmurings.

"Roger," replied the earl, "I see what sustains you in your lonely toil for the truths of God, and I grant all labor and sorrow for the world's advantage well, for the advantage is the noble laborer's sufficient recompense. But hear me. Robert Grostete has long foretold that I should fall in the cause of truth and justice, this strife for the Charter, and I feel that the good bishop has spoken truly. Yet my life will not have been in vain, and my death will establish all for which I have striven. But whatever benefit men are to receive from you rests on the preservation of your writings, and these many are leagued to destroy. Failing this fate, they may moulder to dust, unseen by men, in Oxford

library. So will your life have been wasted. What sustains you against the bitter likelihood that the world will receive no advantage from you, owing to the neglect or destruction of your manuscripts?"

The friar looked at him with a mien of unfaltering majesty.

"Their own worth will preserve them," he answered, with proud humility, "if God means that they shall be preserved."

He turned away, but the reply struck the red flush again to the convulsed features of De Montfort, and drove the bright tears to his eyes.

"I am answered," he said hoarsely. "Well am I answered. But, by the soul of the Lord, I love England less at this moment that she loves not Roger Bacon more!"

There were a few minutes of silence. The friar lapsed into reverie. The earl, subduing his emotion, sat mournfully revolving many thoughts, and gradually passing away through busy mental transitions from the things that had been spoken.

"Well, well," he said abruptly, with a sad, ruminating smile, "I know not why one should despond. The times are stormy, yet they mend, they mend. Certes, Roger, they are better than when your little jest so deftly tilted over that varlet Peter de Rupibus."

"My little jest? What mean you, De Montfort?" said the friar absently.

"I mean *petræ et rupes*, which signifies stones and rocks, does it not?" returned the earl, with a quiet laugh.

"Such is the meaning," replied the friar, still absently, with the air of one whose thoughts were wandering from the colloquy. "But I do not understand."

"What, forget your good wit!" gayly exclaimed De Montfort. "But you forget not Peter de Rupibus, that knavish Bishop of Winchester?"

"Nay, I remember him well," said Bacon mechanically.

"And well you may," continued De Montfort. "Our royal Harry's prime minister more than twenty years agone; he at whose beck England was filled with the rufflers of Poitou, without an encompassing crowd of whom the king would go nowhere; he who ruled the land at his own free pleasure, and so inflamed the king's heart with hatred of his English subjects that his sole thought was how to exterminate them all. Doubtless he meant to do as much for his barons, by aid of the swords of Poitou, when he summoned us to the conference, to which we were too wise to come, and left him to sit there with the clergy. You were a clerk of that conference, Roger."

"Yes, yes," said the friar, smiling. "I remember it all now, though it had passed my memory."

"Ay," continued De Montfort laughingly, "and the king was furious that day, as I have often been told, and brawled lustily at his absent barons, till up spake a young *frère* of your order, a large and portly man, Thomas Bungy by name. You know him well, I doubt not, Roger?"

"Yes," said Bacon, reddening.

"A good patriot," continued De Montfort, not noticing the friar's flush. "Up spake he, and stoutly told the king he would know no peace till he had dismissed Peter de Rupibus. Whereat the king stormed, but the conference declared Frère Bungy's words true, and he grew more reasonable. Then was heard the pleasant voice of Roger Bacon saying, 'Lord king, we sail the ship of England; tell me, lord king, what frightens sailors most, and what is their greatest danger?' 'Sailors know best,' quoth sullen Harry. 'My lord, I will tell you,' replied Roger: 'it is petræ et rupes.' Whereat king and conference roared laughter from their beards."

"That was a hint in Latin," said Bacon, coloring again and smiling.

"Truly," returned De Montfort, with a mirth-

ful face, "and it hinted Peter out of England, I verily believe. 'Ha, haw, ho!' roared Bungy, in huge jollity. 'Petræ et rupes sounds much like Peter de Rupibus, liege king!' 'Ay,' quoth my good Bishop of Lincoln, 'and certes is Peter stones and rocks to us who sail the ship of England.' Ah, well, 't was a little thing, but it softened the king's heart, as good wit in a pleasant voice often does, and left him in easy mood to yield Peter's dismissal at the solicitations of the primate. So the gale of merriment that jest raised blew the minister out of England, and the rogues of Poitou along with him."

De Montfort laughed heartily, while the friar smiled as faintly as might a modern reader of his mediæval joke, coming upon Matthew Paris's version of it, given in the chronicle of Roger De Wendover.

"If jests could blow Peters and Poictevins from England," Bacon said presently, "I would fain fall a-jesting now."

"True," returned the earl; "there are still many foreigners at court and in places of power, though not in such number now as" —

"Nay, I refer not to the presence of the men of Poitou," interrupted the friar, "nor yet to the Italians whom Pope Guilty thrusts upon us, but to" —

A sudden peal of hilarity from De Montfort checked his speech.

"Pope Guilty!" ejaculated the mirthful earl. "Innocent the Fourth rechristened! Pope Guilty! Roger, Roger, while your wit thus brands evil dignities there are other reasons, I trow, for denying you speech and visitors, and nailing your books together, than your simple zeal for the truth of God."

"'T is a truth of God thus to name the Pope," said the friar, with a soft laugh. "For the rest, De Montfort, I misdoubt me but you say true. It was on my lips to refer to the day's riot."

"Ay," thunderously muttered De Montfort, his brow darkening. "It had passed my mind. Know you its cause?"

"I heard that shrill-voiced prentice tell you, as I stood at the window," replied Bacon. "A matter of broken pipkins."

"Broken pipkins!" cried De Montfort stormfully. "Broken liberties, I say! When the idle varlets of a king have power so to deal in a tradesman's shop, what is broken beside his earthenware? God's life, the charter of a nation!"

"Even so," returned the friar. "But was it this that so fretted you, De Montfort?"

"Only in part," moodily replied the earl, champing his mustache as a war-horse champs his curb, while the rage of eye and nostril slowly settled into gloom. "Hear me, Roger," he con-

tinued after a pause. "I will tell you. My royal brother-in-law was taking pleasure in his barge on the river, when the storm came on, and caused him to land at the nearest mansion, which happened to be Durham House, where I then was. The rain had ceased, however, ere he landed. When I came down with my lord the bishop into the garden to greet him, he fell a-trembling, and grew as white as though I were a spectre. 'My liege,' I said, 'why are you afraid? The tempest is now past.' He looked at me with lowering aspect. 'I fear thunder and lightning beyond measure,' said he in a hollow voice, 'but, by the head of God, I do more fear thee than all the thunder and lightning in the world!' Ay, Roger, thus spake he. And he did *thee* me! In the very presence of his malapert courtier crew he did *thee* me! By St. Michael, but that he was the king I could have struck him dead!"

"How answered you?" asked Bacon, his eyes grown bright and keen, and fixed eagerly upon the earl.

"My passion made me calm," replied De Montfort, "and England rose in my heart to answer him. 'Fear not me, my liege,' I said, with my eyes bent upon the scowling crew, — 'fear not me, who have been always loyal to you and your realm. Fear rather your true enemies, who destroy the realm and abuse you with bad

counsels.' At which the brazen caitiffs slunk cowering, and followed Harry of Winchester, who went by without another word."

"Was this all?"

"All," was the reply. "I entered my barge at the foot of the garden, and came hither, — came hither to see, as I passed, the result of just men's blood and grief once again made as naught; wasters of poor men's goods answering with steel instead of silver for their ravages, and holding the city's peace and laws as cobwebs, as they have done time and again. God grant they were well cudgeled, though every blow they got is like to cost the city a pot of money. But it shall not. *Despardieux!* If the king moves to fine the citizens for this outrage of his minions, I will bring it before the council."

"Think not of it, De Montfort," said the friar calmly. "Let the fine follow the wrong, as it doubtless will. Think rather how to limit this king's power for wrong."

"That were good thinking," replied De Montfort, with a gloomy smile. "But how? This year's Parliament has brought forth my best thought, the Committee of Government. To what avail? How check these royal evils, which creep like grass and wind like water everywhere?"

"Hearken, De Montfort," said the friar.

"Time was when Norman scorn could say, 'Dost take me for an Englishman?'"

"Time is passed," whined a voice. De Montfort turned quickly round in his chair, and saw Cuthbert Hoole retreating from the closing door, motioned away by the friar.

"He is weak-witted," said the latter, "and this is part of his poor jargon; but he spoke aptly then. Time is, indeed, passed. The Norman owns himself Englishman. Saxon and Norman no longer, we are all Englishmen. The old disdain lives only in the court of the king."

"Where it keeps the land in constant broil," said the earl.

"Ay, but you can crush it there," said Bacon. "You can array a power against it so formidable that it must bow. Nor can Gloucester's faction maintain it."

"And how?"

"Hearken," pursued the friar. "Statecraft has found that the law of the realm, and not the will of the king, must rule England. Said I not that we are all Englishmen now? Let statecraft, then, find that the law which rules must be made by Englishmen; not by English lords and priests for the people, but by the English people for the people. Poorly will they defend the law made for them; stoutly will they defend the law themselves have made."

"Dost meditate a Parliament of villans, Roger?" bantered the earl.

A deeper pallor overspread the visage of the friar, and upon it stole a smile like dawn.

"I see a time far off," he reverently answered, "when the charters which barons win and cannot keep shall be kept securely by those who shall be villans then no more. Far off I see it coming on its way. So let it come, with all good things, hereafter." He moved up the chamber, with his head bent upon his hand, and, wheeling suddenly, faced the earl. "De Montfort," he cried, with startling energy, "what is it the king fears more in you than the thunder and the lightning? It is that more fearful to the tyrant than the thunder and the lightning, — a brave man's justice. Gift of the Lord to England, a new power calls to your justice for its place in the councils of the nation!"

"What power?" De Montfort eagerly demanded.

"What power studs England with so many free cities and boroughs? Lord earl, they were not built by peers and prelates. Lord earl, the men I speak of hold not by tenure of the villan, nor wear the collar of the slave. Rich and strong with trade and labor, and freemen all, why stand they unrepresented in the politics of England?"

"What would you have me do?" said the startled earl.

"Repay the love that loves you. Summon the burgesses to Parliament. Give them equal place with peers and prelates in the councils of the realm. So, with something like the nation at your back, you can front the faction of the Crown."

The bold reply smote like light on the brain of De Montfort. Instantly he saw the advantage such a move would give him, and a latent thought of his own rose in his mind, one with the thought of the friar. Speechless, with the red flush on his corrugated brow, his features puckered with wonder, and a fire-flash in his eyes, he sat upright, staring at Bacon. Then, smiting the arms of his chair, he threw back his head, and his laugh rang wild and weird.

"Behold," he said, "often as I have mused upon these burgesses, a thought I could not define, like a man masked and cloaked, has come to me. Now, at your words, mask and cloak drop, and your thought I recognize as mine. Powers of heaven, what a measure! But, Roger, 't would be hard to compass."

"First of all," urged Bacon, "seek out Bracton, and get him to look if there be not some precedents for it."

"Ay, well counseled. But hush. Let me think of this, for my mind is all a-whirl."

Bacon turned away, and for five minutes the earl sat in silence, his eyes covered with his hand, absorbed in reflection.

"Robert Grostete's prophecy is like to come true or this," he said at last, in a sombre voice. "Fruitful of much fair fortune would this measure be to England, but woful would it prove to me. It cannot be compassed without collision with the king. Yet what matter! Roger, I will take it into mind, — ay, more: by God's eyes, it shall be accomplished, if it can be! Let the worst come. It is right, it is just. All that I have and am is for right and justice. Oh, happy he who soldiers the good cause! Oh, happy, happy he who can die for it!"

The great earl well redeemed his passionate pledge, as history attests, nor was his foreboding groundless. A few years later, and the measure which laid the foundation of the English House of Commons, and called the great body of the English people into political life, was fully inaugurated, and a new morning rose upon the nation, though with a blood-red dawn.

"Hearken, De Montfort," said Bacon, drawing near him. "Dismiss from your mind all thought of collision with the king. That were ruin. This must be done in the king's name, and it is now your task to win him to your design. I will show you many arguments and

methods by which he may be won. Patience, patience. Take time. The years are before you."

"Roger," said the earl abruptly, "I came here to-day to ask you a question. At my last visit you said something — I know not how, nor exactly what — 't was a dark saying — spoken in jest, too — but it has haunted me ever since — something about enwalling England against invasion. What meant you, — anything or nothing? Dost apprehend invasion?"

Bacon colored deeply under the frank, inquisitive gaze of the speaker.

"It might be," he said, in an evasive tone. "France may at any time spread her banners in the land. Harry of Winchester may ally with Pope Guilty, a papal interdict again hurl Europe upon England as in William Conquestor's time, and the realm see another Hastings."

"Alack!" sighed the earl, "what wall against such invasion as this?"

"A united realm," replied Bacon quickly. "Beware of division with Harry of Winchester. Be friends with him. Resent nothing. Beguile or persuade him into sanctioning all you do. De Montfort, make firm alliance with the king! That is England's wall against all invaders."

"It is well counseled," said the earl thoughtfully, with his eyes fixed upon the floor. "But, Roger" —

Looking up, he saw that the friar had drawn his cowl over his face. De Montfort instantly divined that he had a thought he feared his face might betray, and, laughing, he rose.

"Nay, then," said he gayly, "if you cover your face, I go. But, Roger, thanks for your wise counsels. You have given me much to think of. Thanks, thanks, and for the present farewell."

He clasped the thin hand of the friar in his own brown strong palm, gazed with frank tenderness a moment on the bent cowled head, then, drawing his hood over his face, left the room.

The friar stood motionless, listening to the receding steps of the earl along the passage. They ceased, the heavy door closed resounding, and with a sudden movement he threw back his cowl, and showed his face kindled in shadow, his eyes shining as with interior flame.

"Ay, gift of the Lord to England," he fervently murmured, clasping his hands, "your union with this paltry king shall fortress England from without and from within as with a wall! God grant the android a good success, and he and you shall work in concert!"

He sat down near the table, and, leaning his throbbing head upon his hands, lapsed into exulting reverie, while the sunlight, breaking again from the clouds, streamed aslant through the

window, and lit the chamber with a shadowy splendor of triumphant gold.

A few minutes had passed slowly by in that rich gloom, when the friar was startled from his abstraction by the sudden appearance of Cuthbert Hoole. The idiot darted in, with a frightened glare in his bloodshot eyes, his usually sodden and immobile face distorted with wild excitement, screeched "Time was!" and, spinning on his heel for an instant with dizzy rapidity, vanished through the open door, which closed behind him.

Bacon sprang upright, astounded, and stood holding his breath, with his heart beating and all his blood pricking and tingling, while the very air seemed struck dead around him, so intense was the silence. A moment, and the air crept, as it were, with a strange magnetic life, as, releasing his breath, he stepped quickly to the centre of the room, and again stood still.

"*Per os Dei*," he muttered, "this is strange! Only once before have I known the boy to be thus affected, and that was when the Paduan was here, a year ago. 'T is the time, too, when, if he keeps his word, he must be again in England. Can he be near the house? Tush, no! Yet 't is singular, this mysterious sympathy between that profound and subtle Doctor Malatesti and my poor darkened Cuthbert Hoole. If indeed

there be such a sympathy — Tush, tush! I dream."

At that moment loud blows were heard on the portal. The blood rushed with a shock to the friar's heart. A long pause, and again the blows sounded loudly. Despite his self-control an icy chill coursed through his veins.

"Can it be that the Paduan is here?" he muttered. "Mayhap Cuthbert is afeard."

He made a step forward to answer the summons himself, but his brain swam, and an inexplicable feeling, resembling fear, thrilled through him and made him stand. Again the blows thundered on the portal; but suddenly he grew calm, for he heard the door open, and the thump of a lusty kick upon some human body coincident with the sturdy objurgation: —

"St. Swithin plague thee, thou malformed bunch! Must thou keep a frère of the Lord's flock pounding till doomsday at the portal?"

Bacon smiled in despite of himself.

"Oaf that I am!" he murmured. "Maundering of the Paduan, when 't is only my burly Bungy!"

The next instant Friar Bungy lumbered into the room with the gait of an overgrown elephant. He was a perfect abbey-lubber, enormously fat, nearly six feet in height, and with an incredible circumference of paunch. The rough cord

which, after the fashion of the Franciscans, bound his gray habit around the waist would have sufficed for at least two ordinary brothers of the order. His merry black eyes twinkled under a low but prominent forehead, with its tonsure band of gray hair, and lit his red blobber-cheeked visage, fringed with a grizzly gray beard, with the light of a certain gross genius. He was barefooted, and the heavy flap of his immense dirty feet sounded on the floor with a distinctness which testified to his ponderous weight, as he surged across the chamber, and flung himself, half reclining, upon the oaken settle, which creaked beneath his burden. As he lay thus, blowing obstreperously, with his mighty stomach stupendously rising and falling, he afforded a striking contrast to the spare and graceful ascetic figure of Roger Bacon, who stood, calm as a statue, surveying him with a slight smile on his austere features.

"Oh, Brother Roger," panted the exhausted Bungy in a stentorian voice, "I am well-nigh dead with the speed of my course, and truly am frying in my frock with the sore heat of the day!"

"Nay, Frère Thomas," said Bacon, "you were quick enough to abuse Cuthbert with a most heavy buffet, as you came in. Surely it would better beseem you to deal gently with our poor witless servitor."

The fat friar suspended the operation of wiping with the sleeve of his habit the perspiration from his flushed face, and burst into a jovial laugh, which spread his large mouth from ear to ear, and showed a shining double row of splendid teeth in the boskage of his gray beard.

"Peace, Roger!" he roared, subsiding. "I did slight harm to Cuthbert, but the unready carl was slow to answer my summons, and I was vexed. Make him fetch me a stoop of water, I beseech you, or, by St. Thomas à Becket, I shall die of drought."

Bacon took from a shelf a wooden tankard, but finding it empty left the room to replenish it. No sooner was he gone than the fat friar lifted himself from the settle with a rapidity which denoted no extreme state of exhaustion, and whipping out a large flat leathern flask from his capacious bosom, put it to his thick red lips, and took a draught of what was evidently a stronger and more congenial potation than the rules of St. Francis allowed to the brethren of his order.

"Ah, 't is fine!" said the rotund giant with satisfaction, replacing the wooden stopple, and hiding the flask in his bosom. "A blessing on my cousin the vintner for such a pottle of drink as this! 'T is your true milch cow, by St. Dubric!"

He had resumed his former position when Bacon entered with the tankard.

"What drug have you about you, Thomas?" he asked half absently, as he handed Bungy the water. "I scent spice on the air."

"Nay, I know not," coolly answered the friar, affecting to drink. "Unless it be the odor of my sanctity," he added, replacing the tankard on the shelf. "Sooth, if holy men may smell of spice and roses in their graves, as 't is known they do, I know not why they may not in their lives."

Bacon, absorbed in reverie, did not appear to have heard this audacious reply.

"A wild, warm day," ran on Bungy, lolling on the settle. "Brawl stirring again in the city, and the king's men well thwacked, for which St. Becket be praised. And such labor of sun and clouds, and such clouds, have I never beheld. Pray God it be not a portent of toil and trouble for England. By Dunstan the blessed, I think the fiend is abroad in the realm this day. Such clouds, such clouds! And such devil's roar of thunder, and devil's sheeting of flame, and devil's pelting of rain, as wrought hurly-burly above us ere the tempest passed! Now 't is war of sun and clouds, and beshrew me if I do not think the clouds may defeat the sun, and leave the land without God's candle. Lord forfend it be not

an omen of coming battle betwixt our blessed Sir Simon and Harry of Winchester, and Sir Simon getting the worst of it! That were as good as putting out the sun itself."

"Fear not, Thomas," said Bacon, starting from his musing and pacing up the room. "Storms purge the air as struggle doth the realm, and in the war of cloud and sun, by God's grace the sun is ever assured victor."

Turning, he came down the chamber and took a chair near Bungy.

"Hearken, Thomas," he said in a low voice. "To-day we finish the android, and I have now to tell you its purpose."

Bungy instantly sat up, with his gross face radiant.

"Speak on, Roger," he said. "I am all agog to hear."

"You have ever been one with me in brotherhood and stout heart against England's plotting lords," pursued Bacon. "Swear to me now, Thomas, never to reveal aught of what I am to tell you."

"I swear it by the cross," returned the friar, lifting the holy symbol which dangled at the end of his rosary.

"'T is well," said Bacon. "Listen. In my youth, studying at Paris, I fell in, it matters not how, with a strange Italian scholar of great parts

and learning, named Malatesti. Afterwards, proceeding to Italy, I visited him at his house, a lonely structure of stone on the outskirts of Padua, where he dwelt in utter solitude save for two blackamoor servitors, both mutes. A strange and indeed fearful man was he, scorning all mankind, and his conduct at times truly seemed to savor of insanie. Yet was he, after his manner, gracious to me, and for the rest passing learned. Great store, too, of books and manuscripts, precious as gems, had he; and, moreover, while beauteous in person, though darkly so, and hugely wealthy, he sought not the world's vanities, but, like a true scholar, was all devoted to learning, which made me honor, though I could not love him."

Bacon paused, his face saddening for an instant with an emotion perhaps of pity for a soul removed from God and man.

"Go on, Roger," said the open-mouthed Bungy. "By Swithin, this is as good as a miracle play when Bottle the tanner enacts the devil!"

"At that time," resumed Bacon, "our talk chanced to fall upon the story which Gervase de Tilbury and the monk Helinandus, with others, have recorded as true, though I esteem it as no more than an old wife's fable, namely, that the famed Virgil did construct by magic art a head of brass which could speak and foretell events.

Yet, withstanding me, did the Doctor Malatesti stoutly affirm this true; and such was his occult learning and wondrous logic that he did prove it true, and the thing itself easy to be done, so far as words can prove; nothing being proved, as I hold, save by experiment, and this thing mere absurdity, spite of the Paduan. But, what was really important, holding discussion with him on the nature and difference of sounds, he did show me that articulations, to a great extent, can be effected by simply natural means, so that a machine may be made to utter certain sentences. This machine, compact in form, placed within a bust of brass and set in motion, and lo, you have a brazen android which seems to speak of itself what by means of art it uttereth!"

Bungy clapped his big hands and stamped his feet, roaring with laughter.

"Oh, brave, brave!" he shouted. "This, then, is the machine we have made. St. Swithin be praised for my wondrous genius in braziery, whereby I have fashioned the brass andiron, or whatever the devil you please to call the shell of this thing!"

"Android, not andiron," said Bacon, smiling. "'T is from the Greek."

"Nay, I cannot keep it in mind," said Bungy lazily. "I am so Christian in my very bones that the tongues of heathenesse will not abide

in me. Good breviary Latin, which is a sound gospel language, and my mother English, both of them fit to be spoken in heaven, are all I can patter, blessed be God! As for Greek and Arabic and the tongues of Mahound, faugh! Fie upon such trash, I say! But the machine, Roger. You have wrought upon that apart from me. What will it utter, and for what purpose?"

"Hearken," said Bacon. "I left the Paduan and returned to England. Many years passed on while I wrought at my books and in the laboratory, as you partly know, till about two years ago, when I was experimenting much in optics and acoustics at Oxford, recalling what the Paduan had said, I bethought me to fashion, in leisure hours, by way of diversion, such a machine as he had named. At the end of seven or eight months I had made a small apparatus which could utter distinctly enough these words: 'Art is the only magic.'"

"Brave, brave!" murmured the excited Bungy, all eyes and ears.

"It delighted Robert Grostete and Adam de Marisco much," continued Bacon; "but, bruited around, my envious foes heard of it, and the result was that I was prisoned in my cell and fared hardly, till the good bishop contrived to obtain my releasement. Then something marvelous happened, and, with De Marisco and Grostete

privy to a scheme I had formed, I came here, the bishop lending me this house, and gaining me permission from the university to pursue certain scientific experiments herein. That was a year ago; and a few days before, at my request, you joined me, the Paduan, strange to say, visited me here."

"Blessed be his name!" said Bungy fervently.

"Nay," returned Bacon, "I hardly liked his coming, nor did his visit wholly please me. His conduct savored even more of insanie than when I had seen him years before, and he had certain knowledges of things said and done which almost appalled me, though I have thought that some persons, particularly of disordered minds, breed within them knowledges not common to man, even as diseased oysters breed within them pearls, which are not common to that fish; and in both cases the marvel is one of nature, and not of magic."

Bacon paused reflectively, while at the mention of fish, which was a chief article of diet in those days, Bungy, though mainly engaged with his fellow-friar's narrative, instinctively licked his lips, probably in honor of the oysters, which were then somewhat of a delicacy.

"The Paduan's tone was strange," resumed Bacon. "I told him of the machine I had made,

and in what followed he urged — indeed, I may say, even commanded — me to fashion an android of brass under certain planetary conjunctions and aspects, according to the rules of magic, which he said would in due time answer questions and prophesy, being inhabited by a spirit. His tone was such that I thought not of disputing with him, and, assuming that I would obey, he left me minute directions in writing, and, also, what was most strange, drawings of the internal structure of the human head, neck, and bosom, in whose likeness, he said, the interior of the bust must be fashioned, and with various metals. These drawings he had made, he told me, by dissecting the human corpse" —

"Heavenly God!" ejaculated Bungy, turning pale. "Open a corpse! Sacrilege!"

"Nay," said Bacon firmly. "I think not so. The illustrious Mondini has done the same. Why not? Bodies are cloven in battle, and even mutilated after death. If this may be done in the spirit of war, or, worse, in the spirit of murder, nor be deemed sacrilege, why may it not be done as blamelessly in the spirit of truth and love for the advancement of knowledge, which is the profit of the world?"

"By St. Thomas à Kent, that is well argued!" returned Bungy, rolling his eyes. "But natheless 't is a grave matter to carve up a man like a stockfish."

"However," resumed Bacon, "the Paduan, promising to return to England in a year, left me, and I, disregarding his talk, though I own that in his presence he almost compelled my mind to his thought and will, set about fashioning the apparatus for the android on which we have wrought together."

"And which is now completed, or will be soon," said Bungy eagerly. "But for what purpose?"

"Attend, good frère," pursued Bacon. "Dost remember when this base king built the stone bulwark next the Tower, a wasp's nest of prisons, in which the rich merchants were to be confined till they paid him heavy sums of money?"

"Truly do I," replied the friar. "'T was in 1239. But St. Thomas à Becket brought confusion upon it; for well do I remember the night when the solid bulwark fell down with great din, as though an earthquake had set his shoulder to it."

"Natheless he builded it again," said Bacon, with a gloomy smile.

"Ay, did he," responded Bungy, "and at a cost of twelve thousand marks. Yet no sooner up than down again. 'T was in 1241. St. Thomas guards his Londoners well."

"And well may he guard them," said Bacon quietly. "But 't was not St. Thomas à Becket

brought confusion upon Harry of Winchester's vile jail. 'T was I."

Bungy's fat face became blank with stupefaction.

"You!" he roared. "Roger, are you demented?"

Bacon arose and went to a cupboard, from which he returned in a few moments with a lighted taper and a small metal phial.

"I have told you of the explosive properties of the powder of nitre and coal," he said, "but in this little flask, which I brought in from the laboratory to show you, there is a vapor generated by vitriol and water on iron dust which is also explosive. Look."

Unstopping the phial, he held it aloft, with the light above it. A bright flash followed.

"Confine that vapor in a cell," he said to the staring Bungy, "apply flame, and 't will rive all before it."

He extinguished the taper, replaced it with the phial, and resumed his seat.

"An officer of the Tower," he continued, "had a brother, a rich merchant, on whom he knew the oppression was likely to fall, and chancing to unburden his heart to me, whom he knew, for his brother's sake he willingly lent himself to my scheme. One night, ere the bulwark was inhabited, or indeed well finished, he

took me to lodge with him in the White Tower, and in the night we went in by a private passage to a cell in the basement of the bulwark. I placed in a large earthern vessel he had left there the quantity of iron filings I had brought, and, adding the vitriol and water, covered the whole till the inflammable vapor was evolved. Then, uncovering it, we hastily retired, making all fast behind us, and leaving in the cell a little machine contrived so that it would strike a light within a certain time. That night, as I said, I lodged with him in the White Tower, and in a little while we heard the dull roar of the toppling bulwark. Ay, and again was the same thing done, and again the exploding vapor rived that stronghold of tyranny. The third time never came for its rebuilding."

Bungy heaved a prodigious sigh.

"By St. Dubric, 't was a parlous brave deed!" he exclaimed. "'T was done well!"

"It was done for the good of the people," said Bacon sternly. "Lamed by fortune, not often have I been able, in mine obscurity, to work them such signal service. Yet twice, at least, have I wrought well for them, and now for the third time I come to their service with the brazen android."

"To their service!" cried Bungy, with a great start.

"Ay," replied Bacon. "I told you that, just ere my coming here to execute the scheme whereto my lord of Lincoln and De Marisco are privy, something marvelous happened, and it was that suggested my scheme."

"What was it that happened?" murmured Bungy.

"The king dreamed a strange dream. Dost remember?" asked Bacon sombrely.

"I do," replied Bungy, after a moment's pause, in which the color rushed to his startled features. "It troubled him sorely, and was the land's talk for a good season."

"Truly was it," said Bacon. "He dreamed of lodging in an unfamiliar room, where a Brazen Head appeared and spoke to him, giving him good counsel. But what it said, waking he could not remember. Yet eagerly did he strive to recall what it had spoken, and sorely did he long that such an image might indeed appear to him. 'You would die of fear,' said Humphrey de Bohun to him. 'Nay, by God's head,' said the king, 'I would calmly listen; ay, and abide by its counsel.'"

Bungy gasped, and with the sleeve of his habit mopped the perspiration from a face redder than fire with his excitement.

"Hear, now," said Bacon, leaning forward as he sat, and speaking in low and sombre tones,

with his gray eyes jewel-bright, and fixed piercingly on the visage of the friar. "The time has come when the welfare of England demands that the king shall be guided by De Montfort."

"Ay, does it!" roared Bungy, with patriotic fervor, bringing down his fist like a mallet on the solid arm of the settle.

"What if he should hear such good counsel as this?" urged Bacon. "What if this superstitious king, with the memory of his dream upon him, should have a brazen android appear to him indeed, and speak thus for his salvation? Behold, the android is made!"

"And it will speak to him?" panted Bungy.

Bacon rose swiftly and silently to his feet, like a ghost, and stood dilated, with a white light on his marble brow and wasted features, and his eyes flaming in their hollow orbits.

"Ay," he said, in a low and thrilling voice. "It will speak my thought to him! It will utter Roger Bacon's message to the king of England!"

There was a moment of motionless silence; then, like a majestic phantom, he moved up the room, while Bungy, like one released from a spell, his red face convulsed with a shock of emotions, fell back heavily on the settle, overpowered with the revelation.

Two or three minutes of utter stillness had

passed in the golden gloom of the chamber, when Bungy, with a breath like a bellows, raised his bulk to an upright position, and stretched out his huge legs with an air of boundless pride.

"By Dunstan, I have wrought well to have holped make such a brave andrew as this," he said, in his big bass voice. "Saints! but I feel as if I, and not Sir Simon, were the Mattathias of the suffering people!"

Bacon smiled wanly, and, approaching, resumed his chair.

"I have yet to tell you, Frère Thomas," he said quietly, "how the android is to obtain audience of the king."

"Ay," returned Bungy, "and what it is to say to him."

"What it is to say I defer till you hear it speak yourself," was the answer. "For the rest, listen. The original design was to beguile the king into visiting Robert Grostete at his house in Lincoln, which could easily be done; when, at night, he would find the android in his chamber, and hear it speak in the presence of his attendants. But lately fortune has favored me with a better plan, — one, indeed, which makes it unnecessary that the image should speak by machinery, since a man within it might say all it will say. In the former design this could not have been, for there was no place

to set it but in a narrow niche, where a man could not be concealed, whereas now we have a pedestal ample enough to hide a person, and also to light the android by an unknown process, as then only the king's lamp would have lighted it. But hearken. In the next house lives aged Master Trenchard, once a silk merchant, now rich, and no longer a trafficker. His house and this are both old, dating back to the reign of King Richard. But, what is not known, though I discovered it not long after I came here, there is a secret passage from one house into the other through the party-wall of the laboratory."

"Oh!" grunted Bungy, in astonishment.

"When we go into the laboratory, I will show it to you," said Bacon. "But now hear something wonderful. You know that it hath long been the fashion of this paltry king to go about lodging with men of all stations, and begging gifts of them."

"Ay!" snorted Bungy, with ineffable contempt.

"Five years ago," continued Bacon, "he paid such a visit to old Master Trenchard, and obtained from him an hundred marks. But what think you? This morning Master Trenchard received a message from the king that he would lodge with him on the third night hence, having, he said, certain proposals to offer him."

Bungy broke into a roar of laughter, stamping his feet and pounding with his hands.

"How found you this, Roger?" he said at last, still snuffling and choking with suppressed mirth.

"Master Trenchard himself told me this morning," answered Bacon quietly. "The poor man is anything but pleased with the prospect of the king's visit."

"Marry, I 'll warrant you!" tittered Bungy; "for well he knows what proposals Harry of Winchester will have to offer, and his coffers already rattle with fear."

"Perchance Master Trenchard's coffers may be spared this time," said Bacon.

"How so?" replied Bungy, with an incredulous air.

"Because the king will lodge that night in the merchant's best chamber."

"And what of that?" retorted the burly friar.

"Because the secret passage whereof I spoke opens by a sliding panel into the chamber where the king will lodge," said Bacon, with his eyes on fire.

Bungy instantly sobered, and his large face grew red as a rising autumn moon.

"I see it all!" he said, with a voice like a muffled roar. "The andrew will break the king's sleep by appearing at the open panel."

"Ay!" replied Bacon, in clear, hollow tones. "In the dead stillness of the night the panel will withdraw, and the king, starting from his bed, will see at the cavity, distinct in yellow light, the android of his dream! So, while he gazes spellbound, he shall hear from its lips the good counsel which he shall now remember. Then darkness shall fall, and in the darkness the android shall recede, the panel close, and the king be left alone. But that counsel shall shape his life to its latest day!"

"By St. Becket," shouted Bungy, springing to his feet with an agility none would have suspected him capable of, and striding, with heavy foot-flaps, to and fro, "this is the rarest plot that ever was plotted! It is the most" —

Cuthbert Hoole darted into the room in a frenzy of excitement.

"Time is!" he screeched, in a sort of chant. "Time is! the Brass-Man! Time is! the Brass-Man! Aroint thee, Zernebock! Aroint thee, Zernebock!"

"Aroint thee, thou gibbering brute!" howled Bungy, plunging down like a rhinoceros upon the idiot, who vanished, leaving the door slightly ajar behind him. "Was ever the like of this! Hath the foul fiend possessed the ill-mannered bunch that he thus — Sooth, but I will take a cudgel to him if he beginneth these freaks!

But what the plague — How dark the room grows!"

He had turned at the sudden fading of the light, but his eyes, as they glanced to the window, were arrested midway by the aspect of his fellow-friar. Bacon had risen to his feet, and stood in the pale gray gloom of the chamber, looking towards the door with parted lips and his visage white as death.

"It is a cloud passing over the sun," he said, in a slow, collected voice.

"Eh?" grunted Bungy, astonished.

"This troubles me," murmured Bacon.

"What? The cloud?" said Bungy, staring at him.

"I was speaking of Cuthbert," replied Bacon wanderingly. "I know not what can ail him."

"Huh!" sulkily snorted Bungy. "I know not why you keep such an ill-witted oaf about you. I would sell him to a farmer."

"Nay," rejoined Bacon curtly, "I do not sell men. I had Cuthbert from my rich brother in Somersetshire, and, taking him in pity, I owe him protection."

"Ay," sulked Bungy, dumping down again upon the settle, while Bacon also resumed his seat. "Kindness, kindness! 'T is a vice in you, Roger. Beshrew me, but I think you would be kind to Jews!"

"Truly would I," said Bacon. "I love not oppression, nor outrage in any form; and, to my thinking, in these outraged Jews again is Christ Jesu daily mocked, and scourged, and crucified."

Bungy looked a trifle abashed, but presently relaxed from his sullen mood, and laughed good-naturedly.

"Well, well," he said, "Jews or Gentiles, I mean them no harm. But to return to this brave andrew, or what you may call it — Body o' me, how dark the room grows! Sooth, 't is a grisly twilight, though we have not reached the middle of the afternoon! By my dame, 't is dark as though yon clouds were the black wings of the devil spread over the land, and the devil" —

"Ah yes, the devil! — long life to the devil!" said a singular, shrill voice.

Both friars leaped up aghast. The door was wide open, and on the threshold, in the gloomy brown light, and relieved against the shadowy passage, stood a dark, imperial figure, with a face like marble.

The figure on the threshold was the Paduan. A vague dread rising to a terror, inspired by his peculiar appearance, succeeded the moment's affright which his unannounced entrance gave the two friars. He was a man whose age it would have been impossible to determine, so strange a

mixture of haughty youth and gray maturity was there in his general presence. In person he was tall and shapely, with so much majesty of port that even the majestic Bacon looked inferior in contrast; and yet, mysteriously confused with his august demeanor was a certain flickering air as of ghastly decrepitude, which made the whole seem incongruous and appalling. All that inspires homage even unto worship was in his bearing, but in it was also an indefinable element which would startle and repel homage in the very act of prostration. He wore a long robe of black silk edged with sable, and drooping in ample folds below the knee; and what was noticeable, while his legs, closely sheathed in high travel-worn boots of brown Cordovan, were strong and beautifully formed, they terminated in feet graceful, indeed, in their narrow length and suppleness, but so strangely lean, and their bones and cordy tendons so apparent through the thin leather coverings, that, what with this and with the down-curving pointed toes of the boots themselves, they suggested a morbid fancy of an ill-concealed hybrid of foot and claw. In his hand he held a black traveling-cap of a curious pattern, from which depended a trailing sable plume fastened by a single lurid jewel, a fire-opal, evidently of great purity and value. The whole character of his countenance was that of a mourn-

ful and supramortal but evil beauty. His forehead, surmounted by a splendid chevelure of curling coal-black hair which fell to his shoulders, was not only large, — it was enormous. Strangely, even fearfully developed in the region of ideality, — so much so that the protuberances of the marble temples seemed swelling into horns, while the whole front of the brow was only less powerfully prominent, — it gave an expression of overpowering intellectuality to the face itself which was terrible and painful to behold. A secret and supreme despair rested upon the colorless face like a shadow. A still, sluggish light flamed in the large dark mesmeric eyes, overarched by their black brows. The nose was aquiline, beautiful and haughty. The lips were wreathed with a superb and desolating scorn. The face was beardless, and the bold outline of the chin was the expression of an inexorable will. The whole presence of the man filled the mind with that sensation felt only after the passage of some unearthly dream. Such was the profound and learned Doctor Malatesti.

Bacon was the first to recover his composure.

"Welcome, my illustrious Doctor Malatesti," said he, — "welcome once more to England."

"Great thanks for your courtesy, my marvelous doctor," replied the Paduan, bowing so low that his obeisance savored of grave mockery.

"Great thanks to ye both, my learned frères. I accost ye both, good celibates."

He strode forward two steps from the threshold into the gloomy light of the room, as he ceased speaking, and the door closed with a fierce crash behind him. The friars stood startled and terrified. Bacon himself, with his disposition to refer occurrences to natural causes, could not but feel the nervous perturbation which will possess the coolest mind when such occurrences assume the aspect of the supernatural. The supposition, however, that the Paduan had deftly shut the door with his foot, upon entering, instantly succeeded the fantastic impression that it had been closed by its own agency; though this in turn was dissipated in a vague sense of dread as, following his thought, his eye rested upon the taloned feet of Malatesti, and received the morbid suggestion their strange shape conveyed. At the same moment, a long moan of wind sounded eerily through the grisly gloom, followed by a sullen roll of thunder dying away in sluggish reverberations, and the rushing of rain. The friar looked up with a beating heart, conscious only for an instant of the dark majesty of the motionless figure before him; conscious the next instant that his eyes, burning with a still, naphthaline flame, were fixed upon Bungy, whose face was yellow with dis-

may. At once Bacon, with a mingled feeling of shame that he had suffered himself to be thus affected, and a secret anger at the Paduan's behavior, controlled himself into calm.

"Good Doctor Malatesti," he said, with an assumption of phlegm, "this is my co-laborer, Thomas Bungy."

"I know him well," was the shrill reply. "He is as big as a cask."

The visitor's face was void of all expression as he made this strange remark; but whether in the remark itself, or in the tone in which it was offered, there was involved a contempt so tremendous that it wrought revulsion in the sturdy breast of Bungy, so that his dismay was suddenly overflowed with hearty rage. Nevertheless, he held himself in check, and with an affectation of indifference lounged down upon the settle.

"It is the effect of study," he said complacently, lazily eying the Paduan, while he nonchalantly played with his rosary. "Study bloats a man hugely. At least it maketh me big, while it causeth Frère Roger to wax meagre" —

"You came upon us without warning, Doctor Malatesti," said Bacon, interrupting the burly friar in the exposure he was making of himself. "How happened it that you gained admittance? — for I heard not your challenge at the portal."

"Truly," replied the Paduan, "I was spared the pains of knocking by your shapely servitor, who opened the door as I set foot upon the steps, and ran away on beholding me."

"Ah, the brute!" broke in Friar Bungy, his suppressed rage at the Paduan readily transferred into open manifestations against Cuthbert; "the misshapen varlet! Thus, Roger, doth he maltreat our visitors. By Mary, but I will clapperclaw him!"

"Tush, tush!" said Bacon impatiently. "Cuthbert is commonly faithful and decorous, and needs patience and kind treatment in his oddities rather than the discipline of your rude fist. Good Doctor Malatesti, I pray you be seated. Are you newly from Italy?"

The Paduan, with the mien of some dark emperor, seated himself in Bacon's chair, and, drawing his long rapier from its sheath under his robe, laid it, as if for convenience, on the oaken table.

"I am but just landed at St. Botolph's wharf," he said, "and am newly from Italy."

"Where lodge you during your sojourn with us?" asked Bacon.

"In the air," was the strange answer.

A feeling that the Paduan was indeed mad flitted through the mind of the friar; but, controlling his uneasiness, he affected to perceive nothing singular in his reply.

"You will be pleased to know, good fréres," continued the Italian, — "you who are so given to dabbling in public matters, — that your antichrist, my beloved Pope Innocent, lies at the point of death. You start! Nay, even popes must die, — though fortunately the apostolic succession is secure. Fortunately, I say, for, whatever you may think, such pontiffs are necessary as blocks to the fast and far-going wheels of your De Montforts and Grostetes, who would fain roll the world on a track which would ill suit my political philosophy."

"Nay, good doctor," said Bacon, hastily interposing to prevent the explosion of English wrath which suddenly fermented in the sturdy heart of Bungy and flushed his large face, at the taunting speech of the visitor, "let us not bandy politics. Let us rather hold discourse on matters of science, in which you are a rare adept."

"My good Frère Bungy is, after the manner of the thirteenth century, a patriot," pursued the Paduan, with a strange laugh, evidently paying no attention to Bacon. "Ay, but 't is my doctrine that churchmen should not meddle in matters of state. There must be neither religion nor morals in politics."

"Then were politics irreligious and immoral," said Bacon.

"'T is a doctrine worthy of the archfiend!" roared Bungy.

"Then 't is a worthy doctrine," replied the Paduan, with a placid gravity of face strangely at variance with the devilish sneer of his voice.

Bacon warned Bungy with a look to remain silent. There was an uneasy dread in his heart at the aspect and manner of the Doctor Malatesti, which was heightened by the wild quality of his voice. The tones were grave, yet intensely shrill. Their shrillness was in itself startling and unearthly, and bore, moreover, a fearful incongruity with the still, mesmeric light of his eyes, the calmness of his enormous brow, the solemn, scornful power and mournful beauty of his whole countenance. The laugh, too, with which he had commenced a former remark was singularly unhuman. While it resembled in sound a piercing peal of mirth, there was yet no accompanying movement of the muscles of his face to denote any degree of humor. The voice alone had laughed; the face was cold and immobile as marble.

"To think," resumed the Italian, — "to think of such a fat frockling as you, Bungy, reforming what you call the abuses of the realm! 'T is marvelous. Reform! Can you reform yourself? Remake, if you can, what sire and mother and the life of man made you. Go to, go to! I bid you despair. Preach roses and live nightshade. 'T is the fashion and the fate of man."

"I know not what preaching roses and living nightshade may be," said Bungy angrily, "but I do know" —

"Preach against gluttony and wine bibbing, and practice both continually," interrupted the Paduan.

"By my dame," retorted the fat friar, "but this passes! Thou saucy doctor, know this, — that happy is that friar who can get a taste at odd seasons of stockfish and ale! Meantime, bread of the coarsest and water of the well are the Franciscan's food and drink. Mine is scanty enow, by St. Swithin!"

"Oh, oh!" said the Paduan. "Hear him swear, and by that pig of a Saxon saint! Resolve me this, frockling, — what did you dine on to-day?"

"A wooden table!" shouted the friar.

"Ay, truly, frockling; and what was on the table?" demanded the other.

"Barley crusts and pure water," answered Bungy stoutly, yet with a shade of meekness in his tone.

"Ay, truly," sneered Malatesti. "Your cousin the vintner hath a fashion of garnishing his board with barley crusts and water. Yet own the dinner you made off the better part of a calvered salmon, the pullet sauced with butter and barberries, the forcemeat balls, and the marrow pudding. Rare eating, Frère Bungy."

Bungy's face resumed its former yellow tinge of dismay. His fellow-friar, with a single glance at him, saw that the Paduan's account of the repast was the true one; and at this proof of what might be termed in our age clairvoyant power, and which was another evidence of those strange sorts of knowledge he had ascribed to Malatesti, a cold fear crept through Bacon's soul that the latter might, by the same mysterious faculty, divine the secret of the android. Or was the Paduan no more than some mad charlatan, aiming to confound them with knowledge he might possibly have gathered at the vintner's door or window?

"Rare eating, Frère Bungy," Malatesti continued. "And what of the drinking? What of the nine-hooped pot of mead you guzzled, and the spiced wine? Oh, see now!" and with one circular motion of his arm the rapier swept up in his grasp from the table, and down upon the huge breast of the corpulent frère. The flask was pierced, and Bungy's frock suddenly showed a widening moisture.

"It is my blood!" he roared, starting to his feet. Singularly enough, his first thought, no less than the alarmed Bacon's, was that he had received a wound.

"Yes," said the Paduan, whose rapier had already returned to the table, "your blood! See

it! Smell it!" In fact, the wine at that moment was plashing on the floor, and its spicy fumes were diffused upon the air of the chamber. "I am he that degrades," said Malatesti in his awful voice, with his still eyes fixed upon the pallid visage of Bacon.

Bungy, shuddering through all his bulk, his healthy face grown flabby and livid, and his lips white in his gray beard, tremblingly drew the flask from his bosom, and, turning it so that the wine ceased to flow from the puncture, helplessly sat down, gazing at it, with a hoarse groan.

"It is wine I got for a poor widow," he snuffled presently, with a forlorn effort to maintain his self-respect.

"Hear him lie," said the Paduan, with an intonation of withering scorn.

Bacon remained silent.

"I am the apostle of despair," pursued Malatesti, his eyes still fixed upon Bacon's countenance. "I strip away the mask and show the man. Labor, labor to build the perfect realm; but the realm is made of men, and men are unchangeably bestial at the core. Wolf and snake, hog and harpy, are inextricably mixed in man, and virtue is nothing but a covering lie, itself the foulest vice of all. Despair, I say, despair! In this stripped friar behold the type of your De Montforts, your Grostetes, your saints

and patriots, as they are within. Look to their secret hearts, their hidden lives: there hides the brute half of the centaur, man. Fair and white is the skin, but under the breastbone the hell-pool rages. Oh, may it rage forever! Cheer, Bungy, cheer! The rest are like you."

"Doctor Malatesti" — said Bacon.

"Hear me," interrupted the Paduan. "Men are a base mixture, for flesh and soul agree not. But wise and great is the soul. Provide, then, to build the perfect realm by peopling the earth with souls. For what saith the schoolman? 'The soul is not man,' he saith; 'would it be man if joined to a body of brass?' No, 't would be then the pure soul. Ay, and then 't would tell you how souls may people earth without these ruining bodies of flesh. It cannot tell you till it be shrined in some form which will permit it voice. It cannot tell you in the evil form of flesh, whose quality and motions suspend its spiritual knowledge. But in a form of brass it can tell you. Ay, you, a man, instructed by a soul shrined in an android, can then accomplish the conditions which will render it possible for souls to descend to earth and achieve all things, undarkened in their knowledge by this form of clay. Never from man can you thus be instructed. The soul is metamorphosed in man. Soul and the elements of flesh conjoined make

man, the base, the vile, the brutal, the foolish and unchangeable reprobate."

"Doctor Malatesti," said Bacon sternly, "be done with this, I pray you. For these wild and bitter thoughts I care not, but your conduct" —

A crash of thunder broke his speech, and in the momentary confusion of his vision the imperial figure of the Paduan seemed to loom up darkly before him in the sheeting flame which lit the room as from a gulf below. The next instant, amidst the receding reverberations and the rushing of the rain, he saw that the man had risen to his feet, and was standing motionless in the gloom, the naphthaline light motionless in his eyes, his mournful features passionless and cold in the shadow which rested upon them, and the impression of ghastly decrepitude in his presence seeming stronger now than before, though, as before, unreferable to any trait of his form. The brave-hearted friar, though conscious that he was wrought upon by the weird illusions of the moment, felt their fullest power, and his soul quailed. Bungy, for his part, sat stupidly staring, utterly bewildered by what had passed.

"I am growing old," said the Paduan, in slow, wailing tones. "Long has been my term of haughty youth, — long, long, oh, long, — and men have been as I have wished them to be. Arts, laws, thoughts, religions, all I have with-

stood, nor have they shaken my empire. But the new spirit that rejects the dreams of the mind, and tracks effects to their causes in nature, and will make its highest ideals effects by its knowledge of causes, — it is born, it is born, and I am growing old!"

At these strange words Bacon shuddered vaguely, and a dark, mysterious, confused impression glimmered within him, as if not the Paduan, but another, had spoken. An utter suspension of all sound save that of the storm succeeded.

"It is well," said Malatesti, startling the silence with his piercing voice, and reviving the impression in Bacon's mind that the former speech had been uttered by another. "You would say, Frère Bacon, that I have dealt unmannerly. Be it granted; as ye are both Christian men, good frères, forgive me under the supreme law of charity. Say no more. How fares the android? See, I have taken such interest in your work that I have myself fashioned you the tongue."

Bacon recoiled aghast as the Paduan held toward him a model in gold of the human tongue, which he had taken from under his robe.

"The anatomia of this is perfect," pursued the unmoved Malatesti, "but it must be filled with a molten composition of mercury, brass

dust, and sulphur, the proportions of which I will show you. It will then be ready for fusion with the head. Come, let us visit your laboratory."

Bungy started up abjectly at this imperative invitation, and moved to the door with the Paduan. Unable to interpose, unable even to think, Bacon followed, with his brain in a whirl. Through a door on the opposite side of the passage-way the trio entered the sleeping-room of the friars, an apartment similar in all respects to that they had left, save that its only furniture was a couple of chairs and two pallets spread upon the floor. A small iron effigy of St. Francis stood in a niche in the wall. Grasping this figure with both hands, Bungy drew it toward him. As if by magic, a portion of the oaken wainscot suddenly receded inward, revealing a dark vault, from which floated a strong aromatic perfume. A moment, and Bungy had lighted a torch within. Then, descending three stone steps, the others stood in the laboratory, and the gigantic friar, seizing an effigy similar to the other on the hither side of the wall, drew it toward him, and the wainscot closed behind them.

The flaring torch, projecting from a socket in the wall, dimly lit up the cavernous gloom of the vault, and threw a ruddy, glimmering light on

its grotesque mechanical and chemical furniture. Huddled and distorted black shadows, like a herd of monstrous phantoms, continually moved and flickered on the floor and walls, with the flapping and wavering of the flambeau. At one side of the apartment was the forge, a raised reredos, having somewhat the shape of an altar, on which smouldered a dull fire of coals; and near it stood an anvil, with hammers, smelting-pots, crucibles, and other implements of the foundry strewn about. In the remoter part of the large space were rough tables covered with jars and flasks of stone and metal, glass retorts and alembics, in which trembled divers-colored liquids, and the various utensils of chemistry, together with a multitude of objects too numerous for a brief inventory. Around rose the rough walls, built of blocks of stone, and begrimed with the smoke of all the fires that had burned on the reredos for perhaps a century. The form of the vault was an oblong square. Its windows were closely shuttered, and the high, raftered ceiling, shrouded thick with shadow, would have been altogether undiscernible save for a small circular opening in a corner of the roof, called in the language of the time a louver, which served as an outlet for the smoke, as also for ventilation, though it hardly admitted a ray from the clouded sky beyond.

Presently a stranger object than any lent the place a new interest. Pushed forward by Bungy from a shadowed recess into the centre of the vault, and apparently rolling upon hidden casters, emerged a large square black pedestal, on which stood a shrouded form. In a moment Bungy had removed the covering and disclosed a large bust of brass, truncated above the elbows. The friar lit two cuneiform candles of yellow wax, which he placed upon the front corners of the pedestal, on either side of the image. Their quiet radiance rested strangely on the burnished android, whose metal features seemed to survey the group with a steadfast and awful stare. In remembrance of Malatesti, who had first suggested its formation, Bacon had moulded the face into a counterpart of the Italian's terrible and demoniac beauty, and the flowing locks of metal, which covered the head and fell to the shoulders, were no less an imitation of the curling coal-black tresses of Malatesti. But, though undesigned, there was in the expression of the android a still more startling resemblance; for the lips had been made partly open, and this, added to the stare of the blind, ball-less, awful eyes under the enormous brow, gave to the bright and terrible features an expression of living and terrific despair. It was a fearful intensification of the look which was secret and shadowed in

the mournful face of the Paduan, but it was like a revelation of the true expression of his soul.

He had seated himself at ease in an oaken chair before the image, and his eyes were fixed upon it. No sound murmured upon the sombre silence of the vault, save the aerial and distant rushing of the river of rain. The quiet light of the tapers shed a weird radiance upon his vast and melancholy brow, and served to deepen his expression of solemn and mournful scorn. Silently watching him, at some distance apart, stood the two friars; but the flaring torch, flashing and falling on their shadowy features, threw no ray of its struggling light upon him. He seemed to sit alone, enveloped in a supernatural, still splendor, rich and dim, stately and strange, from demon brow to taloned foot, in that great orb of wizard bloom; the android, a form of solid brightness, like an enchanted head of brassy flame, before him, and all endowed with the surrounding blackness. Only once, when a hissing jet spired from the resinous substance of the flambeau, and penetrated the magic sphere of light in which he sat, Bacon saw a shadow-play pass over his marble features, appearing to wreathe them into a dark and evil smile, and at the same moment that smile appeared to be mimicked by the image. An instant after, and his features, like those of the brazen bust, wore

their usual immobility; but it was hard for the pallid friar to withstand the distempered fancy that a demoniac signal had passed between the twain. A vague sense of horror and alarm rose struggling for a moment in his soul, then sank down and was lost in spiritual gloom.

The silence of the vault was at last broken by the shrill laugh of the Paduan; and as he rose to his feet the flames of the torch and tapers licked downward, and the huddled lights and shadows of the place swayed and reeled in phantasmal commotion. Bacon glanced hurriedly at the louver, with a thought of the entering gust, and as his eyes rested again upon Malatesti the lights and shadows were still.

"Ye have wrought well, my masters!" cried the Italian. "Ye have wrought skillfully and well. Now hark to my directions, for, disobeyed, the spirit will not enter."

"The spirit, sweet Paduan?" faltered Bungy, visibly quailing.

"Spoke I not plainly?" said Malatesti, with withering hauteur. "Hear me. Within three days from the completion of your work the spirit will enter, and the android will speak. I shall be here, and in my presence you shall own, Frère Bacon, as I told you a year ago, that this work is not a delusion, but subject to the proof of experiment, which you so insist upon. But

mark, great frères: ye must not sleep, but sit and listen till ye hear its first command, which must be at once obeyed. Failing of this, the spirit will rend the metal and flee from it forever. Long and sore will be your vigil, but great its reward. Now hearken to the nature of the composition ye must add to the android. But first take the image asunder, and let me view the interior."

Bungy shuddered, but, like one subdued to the will of the Paduan, made a step forward to obey, when Bacon stopped him by laying his hand on his arm.

"Abide here," he said, with solemn compassion, "and pray, Frère Thomas, pray fervently for this disordered soul."

Bungy stared wildly at him, but Bacon, without pausing, advanced, pale and calm, with slow and steady steps, till he stood in front of the Paduan.

"Doctor Malatesti" — said he, with sad solemnity.

"Enough!" interrupted the Paduan, his features cold and passionless, but his voice a furious shriek that froze the friar's veins, — "enough, I say! The android is without an organism. I knew it from the first. You have disobeyed me."

He strode away with haughty majesty toward

the concealed entrance, and Bungy hurried obsequiously to the iron effigy. As the wall yawned asunder, the Paduan turned and bowed low, with his extravagant and almost mocking courtesy.

"Pray the black paternoster," said he. "I go."

"Farewell," said Bacon sadly.

"Farewell, sweet Paduan," added Bungy timorously, though in a stentorian voice. "May St. Francis the blessed attend you!"

"St. Satan attend ye both," replied the Italian, with another low obeisance.

"Blaspheme not, Doctor Malatesti!" cried Bacon sternly.

Malatesti made no answer, but, turning toward the entrance, waved his arms. A distant cry was heard, and in a moment Cuthbert was seen darting through the gray gloom of the outer chamber, shivering and gibbering, with the plumed cap and rapier in his hand. Malatesti advanced upon him as he came forward, and the idiot at once receded. Bacon, following, saw him move along the corridor in front of the Italian, till the portal was gained and opened, when the latter snatched his cap and sword and vanished into the storm, and Cuthbert, closing and bolting the door, stood still, with his back against it.

Bacon shuddered, but a great load seemed to

lift from his spirit, and a blissful sense of relief succeeded.

"Cuthbert," said he after a pause, "come here."

The idiot came at once, with his darting, zig-zag motion, and his face wore its usual stolid and sodden expression.

"Cuthbert," said the friar, "stay in the sleeping-room, and open that portal to no one. Dost understand?"

"Haw," answered the idiot, in his weak, dissonant voice, "I understand. Shall Cuthbert unbar to Zernebock?"

Bacon understood at once that by the name of the Saxon fiend the idiot meant to designate the Paduan.

"Unbar to no one," he said, gently but sternly.

He entered the chamber of audience, and, taking from the cupboard a large drinking-horn, poured into it the remaining contents of the punctured flask, which Bungy had left upon the settle, and returned to the laboratory. The burly friar was standing in the flare of the flambeau, with his massive features pallid and bathed in a cold sweat.

"Frère Thomas," said Bacon kindly, "I judge not men by their infirmities. Drink this; it will do you good."

Bungy, much agitated, took the wine, but, without drinking, gazed fixedly at Bacon.

"Roger," said he tremulously, "I misdoubt me that this Paduan be other than he seems. How knew he of my cousin the vintner, and of my dinner, and of the flask under my frock, and he but newly landed at St. Botolph's wharf?"

"Tush!" cried Bacon. "Vex not your mind with idle fancies. How know you that he spake truly when he said he was but newly landed? How know you that he pieced not together his knowledge by seeing you at dinner through the vintner's window, and noting, as a conjurer of quick sight may, what was on the table, and further by inquiry as to the vintner's relation to you?"

"That is true, by Dubric!" said Bungy, with an air of great wonder, showing immediate tokens of recovery from his affrighted condition. "It is also true that, the day being warm, the window was open, and my cousin's dinner was laid in the room on the ground floor. Moreover, the vintner rose once from table, misdoubting that some one was spying us from one side of the window, though he found no one there."

"Truly the Paduan might have been there, and withdrawn at the vintner's coming," Bacon went on, half believing that this was the solution of the mystery. "Then, too, he might have noted

the shape of the flask through your frock, as he sat before you. For the rest, his sorcerer's face and aspect, his wild voice and evil talk, and the gloom of the day oppressed our spirits, and compelled them, as it were, to superstitious fancies. I trust he will visit us no more. Much learning, I fear, hath made him mad, and perchance he hath a madman's cunning. Let him pass. I mourn for him. Drink, Thomas, drink. The wine will comfort you."

The color had already returned to Bungy's face, and without more ado he tossed off the liquor, and with a sigh of satisfaction smacked his lips.

"It is well spoken, Roger," he said sturdily. "By my dame, I have been fooled rarely by this Paduan, and if he comes hither again I will take the hot tongs of St. Dunstan to him! Certes, he is a godless one, and speaks more like a follower of Mahound than a Christian. I have oft heard of the impious and unbelieving disposition of these Italian doctors of science, and he is one of them."

A flash of lightning suddenly lit the sky beyond the louver, followed by a hoarse roar of thunder. The friars stood mute, with their faces turned toward the android, which, with its rigid lips apart and its staring eyes set upon vacancy, seemed to listen to the long reverberations.

"'T is a fearful day," Bungy muttered, as the silence again descended, broken only by the noise of the rain.

"Ay," responded Bacon, starting from his attentive attitude. "Thomas, I am sorry the Paduan saw the android. It should not have been. But at that moment I could not interpose, and — no matter; it is beyond help now. Come, let me show you the passage whereof I spoke."

Going to the opposite wall, he raised a step-ladder against it, while Bungy, having closed the entrance, on the other side, took the torch from its socket and followed him.

"Come up the ladder," said Bacon, who was already within two steps of the top.

The ladder was very broad, and Bungy, ascending as he was bidden, stood by the other friar's side.

"See you anything unusual in the wall to your right?" asked Bacon.

Bungy moved the flambeau over the surface of the rough, smoke-begrimed stones, irregular in form, but, save that the mortar had fallen out from the narrow and jagged interstices where the blocks joined, as is common in old walls, he saw nothing remarkable, and said so.

"But note this," said Bacon, directing his attention to a small rough block directly in front of him.

"Well," replied Bungy after a long pause, "I note a stone. What of it?"

Bacon rapped it with his knuckles. To Bungy's great amazement, the stone gave back the sound of wood. He rapped the block next to it, but that was really a stone, and so were the others immediately around it.

"Now mark," said Bacon.

He pressed with both hands and with considerable force on the block. It sank inward about four inches.

"Swithin! but that is curious," said Bungy, staring at the little cavity thus formed.

"Ay, but look to your right," said Bacon.

Bungy looked, and nearly fell off the ladder with the start he gave upon seeing that a heavy door, with irregularly serrated edges, cut so as to resemble, when shut, the jagged joining of the stones, had opened outward on his right from the wall. Staring into the considerable cavity it had disclosed, he noticed, by the light of the torch, an upright iron rod fixed at a short distance from the side wall on the extreme right, and supporting in sockets three staples at regular intervals, which were attached to the door, and served it as hinges. The door had but partially unclosed, and Bungy, putting out his hand, shut it to again. At once the sunken block by which it had been opened resumed its former

position, and the wall its usual appearance. Full of wonder, the burly friar felt the door with his hand. It was made of oak, its surface tooled into semblance of the ashlar-work around it, the imitation further heightened by paint, and increased by the stain and smoke of time. Bungy looked at it speechlessly, and while he looked Bacon pressed the block, and it noiselessly unclosed again.

"Now get inside," whispered Bacon; "but speak not, or Master Trenchard may hear you."

Bungy pushed back the door, and stepped into the opening, followed by the other. The secret of the block was then apparent. In a hollow on the left a thick crescent of wrought iron was fixed horizontally on a pivot, with the cusps outward. One cusp was attached to the block, which, when pressed inward, pushed out the other cusp against the door, and thus forced it to open. Closing the door, it pushed back the cusp, and restored the block to its former position. The wall itself was about three feet in thickness, and the space about four feet in width by six in height. The floor, though rough and serrated on its outer edges next the vault, was smooth with a layer of plaster for the rest of the distance up to the oaken wall of Master Trenchard's apartment.

Laying his finger upon his lip as a sign to

Bungy to remain quiet, the friar stepped forward to the panel and listened. There was no sound within. Suddenly he remembered that the old silk merchant had told him that morning that he was to spend the day at a relative's, and he thought he might venture to unclose the panel. Moving it very cautiously in its grooves till he had obtained a slight crevice, he peered in, and then listened again. There was evidently no one within, and at once he boldly slid back the panel, which moved noiselessly in the grooves he had previously oiled, and left in the wainscot a space of about four feet square. There was no one in the room, and the friars quietly stepped in through the opening, directly opposite which was the bed, with its overhanging tester, where the king would lie.

They approached it, and, gazing for a moment at the open square in the carven frame of the wainscot, looked at each other with exulting faces. A common thought was in their minds, — a vision of that dead silence of the night when the king, starting up in the bed behind them, should see before him the brazen android of his dream, bright-shining, mystic, terrible, and hear from its awful lips the counsel that should grave itself upon his memory, and shape his life to its latest day. Then let the curtaining darkness fall, the pallid king swoon back upon

his pillow, the hearts that beat for England beat on with fuller pulses behind yon oaken shell; for the best voice of the suffering land has spoken, the soul of the tyrant is shaken to its centre, and the era of a new triumph bursts like sunrise upon the realm!

Hark to the howling of the storm. Sullenly burns the flambeau in this grisly gloom, where the light comes brown and dim through panes of horn, and the furniture takes uncouth shapes that seem to watch, and shadows lurk in a silence that is too still, and yon square cave of blackness unnaturally yawns. Away, away! Softly over the floor strewn with rushes, which strangely rustle beneath the tread; softly and by stealth in at the panel, with chills and creepings of the blood; a moment behind it, with a dread sense of the still chamber it shuts from view; and out from the wall two pale-faced, gray-robed forms, flickered over with shadows from a tempestuous torch which flares redly on the grotesque gulf below. So down the ladder from the closed cavity, and into the vault again, where the yellow wedges of wax burn with a quiet sense of nightmare; and the awful android, staring between them with ball-less eyes and rigid lips apart, seems listening, in the hush of the black gloom, — listening, listening for something to come.

Hush, indeed! So deep a silence had fallen upon the place that it was as if sound other than the remote and muffled noises of the storm might never be heard again, — a silence by whose compelling charm the ghostly twain must mutely stand and listen, while the spectral herd of shadows quietly flit and flicker around them in the red tossing flame and smoke of the flambeau, and nothing else moves but the colored reflections of liquids in retorts and limbecs, dimly trembling in the murk beyond; till at last the spell yields, and the voice of the burly friar whispers upon the silence.

"A fear came over me, Roger, as I stood in that chamber."

Bacon looked at him for a moment without answering.

"I felt it, too," he said abruptly, in low tones. "But a day like this breeds fear."

"Ay, truly," responded Bungy. "'T is a grewsome day. Ha! Hear it!"

Through the louver the lightning shook bright and long, and the thunder broke like an ocean overhead.

"Come," said Bacon, as the reverberations died away, "let us to work, and make an end."

Hastily divesting himself of his gray frock, Bungy raked up the cinders of the forge and fanned them into a red glow, while Bacon, set-

ting one of the wax tapers on a table which he had brought forward, placed next upon it a complex apparatus which he had taken from a closet near by. It was the articulating machinery of the android, and hitherto he had wrought upon it in the adjoining chamber, that he might be undisturbed in the severe thought necessary to its construction; while Bungy, with his genius for braziery, toiled at the casting of the shell, the moulds for which, however, the other friar had fashioned. In this age, when the experiments of Kempelen, Willis, and others have shown in detail the contrivances by which articulate sounds may be artificially produced, and when the exhibition of an android capable of uttering several sentences has completed the demonstration, it would be unnecessary and tiresome to describe the machine through whose agency Bacon aimed to subdue to England's welfare the will of the mean and froward king. It is sufficient to say that to the eye it presented the appearance of a complication of variously formed tubes of reed and metal, wheels, bellows, weights, and pulleys, leathern bladders, hammers, plates of brass, and, in the centre of all, a toothed cylinder, on which the speech of the android was scored. It was all but completed, needing only the modification of a single tube; and on this the friar, seated near the table, busied himself,

unmoved by the increasing fury of the storm. Bungy, meanwhile, having taken the android from its pedestal and laid it on a cushion on the floor, was constantly moving between it and the forge with little crucibles of molten metal or red-hot tools, engaged in soldering a piece into its back.

The unearthly had become more than ever the soul of the scene. Bacon, sitting apart in his gray habit, with the mechanism before him, the quiet light of the taper on his pale brow and slender features, appeared like some sad-faced wizard; while the lubber friar, in his close-fitting undergarments of white cloth, seemed some strange, unwieldy demon toiling at his behest, in the dusky glow which radiated from the forge like a red and misty dome imbedded in surrounding gloom. The dark recesses of the vault, the uncouth furniture glimmering unsteadily, the distorted shadows reeling and wavering to and fro, the sombre lights of torch and forge upflashing and sinking on the shaggy blackness of the walls, the seething of metal, the sighs and hisses of the foundry fire, the rushing and bellowing of the tempest without, — all lent the scene a wild and fearful interest. Never yet was plot for a nation's welfare conducted under more forbidding auspices, nor attended with darker omens. Bungy, indeed, thought little

now of what had passed, but in the soul of his fellow-friar the strange visit of Malatesti had left a sense of evil augury. The day had suddenly become like night to him, and into that night had slid a brief but ominous dream; and as one waking from a dream, with the night around him, longs for the coming of the day, so, and with such an oppression on his heart, longed he for the morrow. But the morrow was still far away, and the hours dragged slowly by, with ever-rising wind and raging storm.

Steadily, meanwhile, and in silence proceeded the friars' labors. The time wore toward evening, and Bacon had finished his part, and was absorbed in gloomy reverie, when his fellow-worker stood before him, with his large face flushed and his frock on.

"I am done, Roger," he said, drawing a long breath.

"And I," answered Bacon, his features lighting. "Now for the experiment."

He rose quickly from his seat, and, going to a distant corner of the vault, returned presently with a large sack of varnished silk, distended to its fullest capacity, with a heavy weight attached to one end of it, and a flexible tube of metal to the other.

"Ha!" said Bungy, jovially patting it, "here is our skin of inflammable air. Fire was his father and coal was his dame."

Modern nomenclature would designate the contents of the sack as carbureted hydrogen, or coal gas. Bungy had seen his scientific brother make it that morning. Without replying, Bacon opened the back of the pedestal and deposited the sack in the interior. The end of the metal tube attached to the sack was passed up through an orifice in the top of the pedestal, at its rear, and secured. The stopple was then taken from the tube, and over it was fitted another in the form of a curved rod, with a key at its lower extremity to regulate the passage of the gas, and at its upper a half circle of metal pierced for jets, and supported horizontally on its centre.

Presently the articulating machinery was fixed upon the pedestal, and the android was lifted from the floor and placed over it. A half hour was occupied in its proper adjustment, at the expiration of which all was ready. Bacon wound up the machinery by means of a key in the back of the image, turned on the gas a little way, and passed a taper over the half circle of metal which projected above the head. The lights were then removed, and in the dimness the awful front of the android was seen surmounted by a dotted arc of blue flame.

"We have it now," said Bacon, "as it will appear when erected behind the panel, just be-

fore unclosing. I will couch behind the pedestal to set all in motion. Do you stand by the panel, and when you hear a brazen sound you shall unclose."

He moved the spring in the back of the image which set the machine in operation, and then stooped from view behind the pedestal. A few seconds of breathless silence succeeded, in which Bungy, standing at some distance in front of the work, stared at it with his heart wildly throbbing. Suddenly a loud and hollow clang, like the sound of a blow on a brass timbrel, blared from the android.

"The panel uncloses," said Bacon in a sombre voice from behind the pedestal. "If the king wakes, he sees in the darkness a dim form under an arc of fire-dots. If he wakes not, he will soon."

There was a pause, and again the clang blared from the bosom of the android. Then arose a strain of solemn music, dulcet and wild and sad, the fire-dots slowly spired into dazzling jets of yellow flame, and the android stood out, awful-fronted, under that mystic coronal. Bacon appeared, pale as a spirit, from behind it, and came to Bungy's side.

"The king sees and hears it now," he whispered.

Bungy did not answer. His whole soul was

absorbed in that vision of an enchanted head on its black pedestal, from whence the wild and solemn music was proceeding. The melody, winding on in mournful mazes, ravishing in sweetness, gradually swelled into a long æolian wail, sad as the night wind wandering through the gulfs of air, funereal as the midnight voices of the pines; and, drooping from that sustained swell into a sweet and dying cadence, it merged with a heavy-sounding monotone, from which, attuned by that undercurrent of low, mysterious music into a strange harmony, a measured voice arose, hollow, distinct, and shrill.

"King of England, hear me."

The words, slowly chanted with a monotonous metallic resonance of tone, failed from the low murmur of music which still sounded on, and the petrifaction of living despair on the features of the resplendent android seemed to have changed to a look of austere and startled anger. A chill of dreadful pleasure curdled the friars' blood. The effect of the strange voice, added to the magical presence of the image, in the gloom of the vault was indescribably weird, and it was almost as if a supernatural intelligence had entered into the creature of their hands. Again the music swelled into a prolonged wail, and, sinking into a low dirge, again the voice spoke.

"I mourn for England. Hear me."

The dirge deepened, and, shuddering downward, ended in a sounding knell, and a sweet and solemn carol succeeded. Gradually diminishing in volume, it continued in a silver thread of melody, and again the voice.

"I counsel well. Hear me."

The continuing thread of melody rose to its full volume in the music of the carol, gradually melted into a golden and jubilant strain, and shook out proudly in notes of triumph. Increasing in movement, it changed to a stately dance, haughty, delirious, rejoicing, and lessening in tone till it became like the far-off sound of the dancers' feet dancing in joyous measure, when once more the voice was heard.

"Follow Sir Simon's leading! Obey me. Follow Sir Simon's leading! Obey me."

A sepulchral blare of brazen sound boomed hollowly at the conclusion of each sentence, and the music died. Bacon sprang to the key of the gas-tube; the coronal of flame went out, and the android stood obscurely shining from the dusky gloom.

"It ends here!" cried the friar, returning to his comrade with a step of victory, his usually colorless, calm face convulsed and crimson with excitement. "As the last clang sounds, the lights go out, the panel closes in darkness, and the king has seen his vision!"

"Ay!" roared Bungy, flinging his arms around the speaker with furious joy, and bursting away to bestow a similar hug upon the android. "Oh, brave andrew! Oh, brave Roger! Oh, day of grace! And, thou, Harry of Winchester, — for I do *thou* thee, and *thee-thou* thee, thou varlet king! — thou shalt see thy andrew, thou spendthrift, and mark it well, thou thief; ay, and hear its counsel, thou bloodsucker, and abide by it, thou Jew! By St. Thomas à Becket, I do hope it may leave gray locks on thy pate, thou charter-breaking, coffer-draining Lombardy robber! 'Follow Sir Simon. Follow Sir Simon.' Well said, my brave singing andrew! Oh, rejoice, Sir Simon, rejoice, protector of Englishmen, — rejoice, rejoice, for, by Dunstan, you are good as king from this hour!"

And Bungy, ceasing from the mad gesticulations with which he had accomplished this triumphant ebullition, only delayed to whip up his frock and fall a-prancing like a joyful hippopotamus. Up and down, to and fro, unheeding the raging war of lightning and thunder, wind and rain, which swept and bellowed around the dwelling, the paunchy friar went capering bulkily, his big legs swinging, and his big feet flapping here and there and everywhere, in the exulting fury of his ponderous evolutions, till,

stopping as he did in a minute or so, he threw back his head, and, walking hither and thither with tremendous strides, proceeded to roar forth in a stentorian voice a Latin psalm.

Bacon, meanwhile, resuming his usual composure, though he carried a victorious heart at the success of the trial, busied himself in removing the remains of the sack of gas from the pedestal, and taking off the illuminating crescent. He finished in a few minutes, and approached the uproarious friar.

"Thomas," said he.

Bungy stopped singing, and, advancing, laid his huge hands on Bacon's shoulders, and showed all his teeth in a jovial peal of laughter.

"You are merry, Thomas," said Bacon, with his austere and gentle smile.

"Merry?" shouted Bungy. "By Swithin, I am merry as a lark! Merry as a man should be who has helped save England!"

"And I," said Bacon, — "I feel a strange joy of spirit. All has gone well thus far. But hearken. We have now three days before us. The first thing to-morrow, we must make contrivance so that the panel can never be opened again after we have done with it."

"Well bethought," returned Bungy; "for the king might send his carpenters to see if there be a passage there."

"He might," said Bacon, "though I have small fear of his doubting the supernature of the android. He is much given to superstition, and his strange dream will confirm that bent of mind. Still, let us omit nothing for safety. We must make ready to close the panel, and also build up the cavity. The stones for that purpose are those I have provided in yonder corner."

"You think of everything, Roger," said Bungy, with an admiring sigh.

"Then," pursued Bacon, "immediately after the king has seen it, the android must be removed, and buried in the pit we have dug under the floor. And so our task will end."

"And I shall go chuckle to see Sir Simon schooling the king," snuffled Bungy, shaking like a jelly with suppressed mirth. "Sooth, but I ought to be made a bishop for this."

Bacon smiled, and, going to the wall near the forge, took the flambeau from its socket, and returned.

"Lord! 't is fearsome foul weather," muttered Bungy. "Hark to that."

A tremendous explosion of thunder was sounding overhead, and as it echoed away there was flash upon flash of lightning, with the cataract pouring of rain and howling of wind.

"How the andrew seems to hearken!" con-

tinued Bungy, staring at the image, which now appeared, in the red light of the flambeau, with its whole mute front as if intent on listening. "I have noted several times this day that hearkening look on its brass visage, which is too much like that Paduan's to be lovely. Sooth, too, I bethink me now that its voice is like his, also, were he to speak with accompaniment of music. That is curious, by Francis! And how it hearkens! As if" —

"Come," said Bacon, "cover the android, and wheel it back into the recess."

Bungy was about to obey, when a sharp cry from Cuthbert was heard in the outer chamber. Both friars started, and Bacon nearly dropped the torch. The next instant the wainscot yawned open, and the idiot sprang in. He was in the very ecstasy of terror, his sodden face writhing, and great tears starting from his wild bloodshot eyes; and as he danced about, in his close-fitting garb of red, mopping and mowing in the light of the flambeau, with his thin misshapen limbs jerking like those of a puppet, and his shock of yellow hair tossing from the huge head set low between his hunched shoulders, he looked like one of those Libyan anthropophagi described so vividly by Herodotus. But his anguish had nothing of the monster; it was painfully human.

"Cuthbert, Cuthbert!" cried Bacon, starting forward with the torch, while Bungy stared, open-mouthed. "Peace, boy, peace! What is it?"

"Oh, my lord," shrieked Cuthbert, "time is, time was, time is passed, and he comes, — haw, haw! — and he comes, and I feel him, and he comes" —

"What ails thee, thou reprobate?" shouted Bungy. "Hath the fiend possession of thee?"

"Ay, the fiend, — ay, the fiend!" screamed the idiot; "and he comes, the Brass-Man, Zernebock, the Brass-Man, Zernebock, — he comes, and I feel him, in my head, in my breast, in my skinny right wing — coming, coming, coming, coming!"

And suddenly, with his yellow hair swirling from his head like a garment, he spun with great velocity on one foot, and springing, with the impetus of his rapid whirl, through the open wall, vanished.

Both friars stood like statues of horror. At that moment the tempest again broke in heavy rebounding roars, and amidst the howling and rushing of wind and rain they heard the unbarring of the portal and the keen cry of Cuthbert. Bacon was like one smitten with palsy, but an icy chill passed through his frame as he heard that cry.

"It is the Paduan!" he gasped. "Quick — away with the android — arrest him — he must not enter here!"

"I will strangle him!" roared Bungy, purpling with rage, as he rushed to the entrance.

At the top of the three stone steps appeared the dark figure of Malatesti, and Bungy, plunging against him, reeled back tottering into the vault, as though he had hurled himself against an iron statue; while the Paduan, without a pause, like one who had not felt the shock of the friar's onset, made but one step of the stairs, and coming with straight, swift strides, planting his taloned feet noiselessly but firmly, directly toward Bacon, paused at a short distance in front of him. His movement, though swift, had a certain measured and majestic cadence, and his features were locked in their usual cold, impassive, marble scorn. The black robe drooped with heavy patrician grace around him; the strange black cap was on his head; the sable plume trailed across his mournful brow; the red jewel which held it burned still in the torchlight like an evil eye. But not on plume or garment, nor on his ebon mane of falling hair, nor anywhere about him from head to sole, was there one trace of rain; not one sign of the wind that was roaring like a whirlpool in its tempestuous sweep around the dwelling; not one

token of the flood that was deluging the streets of London amidst bolted thunder and sheeting fire! Nothing in his presence, at such a time as this, could have been so awful.

As he stood before Bacon, dark and grand, regarding him with still eyes, the pallid friar let the flambeau droop slowly in his nerveless hand, and in that lurid ray upstreaming as from the pit, and upcasting black shades where the lights were before, all things became hideous and unnatural. The friars were as gray ghouls topped with demonic skulls of white and ebony; the phantom majesty of Malatesti wore a black-dappled livid mask of Death; the android was a brazen demon, cavernous-eyed, bizarre with shadows, and with a look of horror and hellish joy commingled on its glaring features; and all around black mongrel shapes of shade sloped up the floor, or loomed monstrously on the shaggy gloom of the walls. While heaven and earth seemed reeling from their centres in the tornado madness of the storm, the vault was a core of silence.

A moment, and the silence was broken by the Paduan.

"You have dared to disobey me!" he said, his voice piercing that face of marble. "Behold!"

He stretched out his hand toward Bacon, and

in the open palm lay the tongue of gold. A cold disgust mingled with the affright of the friar as he gazed upon it. Suddenly the Italian dashed the tongue to the floor, and it blew to atoms. Bacon recoiled at the explosion, and Bungy dropped on his knees, frantic with fear, and began to gibber his prayers.

"I am the Lord of disaster," shrilled the Paduan. "Thus shall it be with yon android. I bade you fashion it in the interior likeness of the body, that Simara, the wise dæmon, might dwell in it. You have disobeyed me. Simara shall rend it."

"Vile charlatan!" shrieked Bacon, starting forward, and menacing Malatesti with the flambeau. "Hence, or I dash this torch into your face! Think you to cow me with your jugglery? Am I to be deluded by your fool's talk of dæmons and brass anatomy? Hence, madman or knave, or both, — hence, I say! Up, Bungy, up, and cast me this wretch from the door!"

Bungy did not seem to hear, but in a lunacy of terror continued to gibber his prayers. The Paduan laughed. For a moment Bacon stood irresolute, choking with exasperation; then, rushing past Malatesti to the entrance, he thrust the flambeau into a socket there, and returned.

"You have terrified my poor co-laborer from

his manhood, but you terrify not me," he said fiercely. "Now go from hence, or I set upon you."

"Know you Master Trenchard?" asked the Paduan, with a cold and quiet countenance.

Bacon fell away a pace, and gazed at him. Thought and passion in an instant gave place in his mind to a whirling vacancy.

"The king is to lodge with him," the Paduan continued.

A terrible agitation flowed in upon the mind of the friar, but he controlled himself to appear calm. His first thought was that Malatesti had divined the plot. Then came a doubt, born of the habit of a scientific intellect, instinctively skeptical and averse to rash conclusions. He might only have uttered, madman fashion, at random what some one in the neighborhood had told him, and it was not a necessary inference from his speech that he knew more. Yet this theory of it was half shattered in the mind of Bacon as the Paduan again laughed.

"I go," he said, stepping back a pace, his form in shadow, and darkly defined against the light of the torch behind him. "Yet ere I go, listen. You disobeyed me because you doubted the truth I know for truth. Resolve me now the mystery of birth. Why forms and lives the infant in its mother's womb? It is because the

soul has entered there. Why enter thus for birth the myriad generations of souls? Know you not the hunger of souls to be born? Know you not what well-attested histories and living men's experience affirm, — that in this hunger of souls for birth they will even possess the bodies of men wherein souls are already shrined, making them mad with the discord between the two; nay, more, that they will even enter chairs and tables, giving them motion and intelligence? And whence come these souls thus madly hungering to be shrined in earthly forms? Behold, the vasty deep of space is full of them. They float, they wait continually, — they wait for the conditions that will make their mortal birth possible; they dart to their opportunities for mortal being. Well said the divine Plato that the air is full of men. Ay, full of men hungering to be born."

He stepped back another pace, and while a heavy peal of thunder resounded overhead, and the lightning flashed fiercely beyond the louver, he mystically waved his hands.

"Pray the black paternoster. I go!" he said in his shrillest tones. "Yet hear me. The souls that enter bodies suffer thereby suspension of their spiritual knowledges and powers, which are mighty. The quality and motion of the fleshly form thus affect them, though the human shape hinders them not. Here, then, as I have

said, is the virtue of brass androids. Their shape, external and internal, being human, attracts souls to enter them; and these being neither flesh nor motion, the mighty spiritual knowledges and powers of the souls suffer no diminutions. Lo! the mighty and wise dæmon, Simon, obedient to me, would have entered yon android, and made you all-strong and all-wise with his power and wisdom. But you have disobeyed me. Ay, and you believe not in Simara. But you shall believe, and tremble."

Slowly raising his hand, he laid his forefinger on the opal in his cap.

"Aloft there, Simara!" he cried. "By the strong gem, answer me!"

There was an interval of breathless silence, and then from the darkness of the roof a thin, silvery voice sounded.

"I am here."

The effect was terrible. Bungy started from his knees with a hoarse yell, and staggering to the entrance fell down on the steps, where he remained, shuddering and gasping, with his ghastly face turned toward the ceiling. Bacon stood like one petrified, ice in his veins, fire in his brain.

"Descend, Simara!" cried the Paduan. "By the strong gem, obey me!"

A roar of thunder volleyed above the dwelling, and echoed away into rain-rushing silence.

"I am here," said the quiet silver voice, speaking from beside the android.

Bungy uttered a hoarse groan, but over the visage of his fellow-friar a flush crept slowly. The Paduan seemed to notice it, and his face grew dark, as if with passion, and his imperial form dilated to its fullest majesty.

"Enter the android, Simara!" he screamed, with appalling shrillness, stamping his foot, and waving his arm with the gesture of a king.

"I have obeyed you," said the voice, after a pause, speaking fiercely from within the android, as if in anger and agony. "But it pains me, and I cannot abide."

"Rend it, Simara!" shrieked Malatesti, with a furious and commanding gesture, swiftly receding, as he spoke, to the entrance of the chamber.

Bungy scrambled up as the Italian drew nigh him, and was crouching down against the opposite wall of the sleeping-room before the latter had set foot upon the steps.

"Hold, Malatesti!" shouted Bacon, dashing forward on the track of the flying Paduan. "Dost think me deluded by thy damned ventriloquy? Hold, I say!"

He caught up an implement of the forge which was lying near the steps, and bounded after the Italian, who had already gained the corridor.

Reaching it himself, he saw him spring with an airward leap from the open portal, and vanish; and, aided by the sudden expansion of the black robe in the wind as he sprang, the horrid fancy flashed across Bacon's mind that he had changed into some black-winged monstrous thing and melted into the air. Passionately hating himself that such a fancy had entered his brain, even for a second, Bacon, without pausing, rushed after him. The rain was pouring in torrents through the gray twilight, as he leaped forth into the street. But at the first glance he saw that the street was empty. Malatesti had disappeared.

Entering the house again, and barring the door behind him, he returned swiftly to the sleeping-room, with the rain upon his face and garments. Bungy was still crouching against the wall, in the dim light from the reflection of the flambeau in the vault, and feebly turned toward him, as he came in, a face flabby and livid, whose eyes, orbed with terror, showed their pupils in white circles. Too agitated for the moment to heed him, Bacon stood silently, with his nostrils quivering in the pallid rigor of his countenance. Gradually his anger settled into composure; wiping the moisture from his face and head with his sleeve, he approached the entrance, and, casting in upon the floor the forge imple-

ment, was just turning back again into the room, when there was a stunning crash, the vault filled with fire, and the building rocked to its foundations. Bacon staggered back, lost his balance and fell, reeled up again to his feet, all in an instant, and stood rigid, with a face of death, his brain tottering, and a dreadful feeling within him as though his very soul were rent asunder, and were rushing from his frame. An utter silence had succeeded that vast crash, through which was heard the pouring of the rain. The vibrating air was filled with a heavy sulphurous odor. Within the vault the flambeau was still burning, and the shadows were sullenly flickering in the ghostly gloom. Suddenly the friar sprang to the entrance, and gazed. One instant he gazed, and a horrible cry, like the shriek of a damned soul, pealed from his lips and shivered away into the tingling silence. There lay the android, shattered to fragments, on the floor!

He stood motionless. But with that cry the weight of agony lifted from his mind, and left it utterly dark and vacant. He saw nothing, he heard nothing; he had neither sensation nor consciousness. Complete annihilation had become his portion. Gradually a dim, remote sense that slow ages had passed, and that another was slowly passing, a vague, uncertain impression that he had died long, long ago, and had

become something inessential, floated, a mere filmy spectre of mentality, through the gray void of his brain. Then succeeded a dim apprehension that something had crept stealthily to his side, and paused there, and he heard a hoarsely whispering voice speaking near him, yet seeming to come from an immeasurable distance.

"The fiend Simara hath rent it!"

He heard the words without receiving their sense, but, slowly turning his head, he became aware that he stood in the dark room, on the threshold of the lighted vault, and, looking down, saw Bungy resting on his hands and knees beside him, like some huge, gorbellied brute in the likeness of a man, glaring up into his face with a distorted flabby visage, a brow wrinkled beneath its tonsural band of hair, and an ugly disk of shaven crown. A frigid thrill stole through his frame. With a touch like that of ice on air, his chill hand rested on his giddy brow, and he tried to remember what had befallen. Consciousness uncongealed, slowly, slowly, and trickling in like an ice-brook, welled up cold, still, and clear within his mind. He remembered everything. Glacial, torpid, mournful, the mental images arose in a trance of despair. It was all over. The long, patient, fervid labors of a year; the thought, the hope, the dream, the

patriot's zeal whose soul was woven into the work like solemn music; the victorious result already on the operant verge of victory; the whole superb conspiracy for justice rising robed and crowned, and reaching out its hands in blessing on the nation, — it had all become involved in the wild *bizarrerie* of tempest and gloom and omen, the shocks, the perturbations, the accursed apparitions, the fierce, unnatural concentrated life of the last few hours, and in one crash of flame it had shivered to nothingness. Rage on, king, whose sceptre is a wand of bane to England, thy lawless power unchecked, thy evil resolution unsubdued! Toil on, De Montfort, and vainly toil to blight and bar the ills that creep like grass, and wind like water everywhere! Bleed, bleeding people, and rave and madden under ever-piling accumulations of suffering, till ye rise and rive with the red blast of battle, and the realm topples from its basis, and cold tranquillity sinks down on ruin and the ghosts of things that were! For it is all over. The power that would have essayed to roll back fate is a power no longer. All is ended and done.

He turned, icy cold and trembling, and, with a dull lethargic ache in his spirit, feebly wandered into the room. Bungy had crept back to his former place, and was crouching down against the wall, looking at him.

"The fiend Simara hath rent it, I say!" he repeated.

Bacon saw him dimly with misty eyes, and, striving to understand what he said, his mind received only an inapposite sense that not more than a minute had elapsed since the catastrophe took place in the vault. He covered his eyes with his hand, and endeavored to collect himself.

"I say the fiend Simara hath rent it!" gasped Bungy, hoarsely as before, but in a voice which had risen from the whisper to a low muffled bass.

"Yes, yes, I understand," faltered Bacon, with the most confused apprehension of what the other was saying; "the lightning smote in at the louver, and" —

A sound of gnashing teeth made him pause and drop his hand from his eyes. With a vague tremor he saw that Bungy had risen to his feet, and was huddled against the wall, grinding his jaws, and glaring at him from the dimness with a look of sullen and truculent rage on his livid visage.

This he saw, but in his bewilderment knew not what it meant, and stood helplessly gazing at the friar.

"Thou abominable sorcerer!" suddenly howled Bungy, plunging forward and clutching him by the throat. The shock of that assault brought

Bacon to his senses, and, with an instantaneous revulsion of strength, he seized Bungy's wrists, wrenched away his hold, and flung him back to the wall.

"What means this?" he demanded in a low, intense voice, with his eyes burning and fixed upon the friar. Bungy did not answer, but stood drawing his breath hard through his set teeth. For a moment Bacon gazed at him; then, going into the vault, he returned with a torch, fixed it in a socket in the wall, and again confronted him.

"I had not looked for this from you, Thomas," he said sadly. "Why have you laid violent hands upon me?"

"Ach! Thomas! Thomas me no Thomases!" gnashed Bungy, frantically shaking his fists at him. "Thou vile sorcerer! Thou hast had commerce with the fiend! I know thee. I have smelt thee out."

"I commerce with the fiend? I, Thomas?"

"Ay, thou! Didst thou not tell me that he taught thee how to make the andrew? Didst thou not? Deny it if thou canst!"

"Frère Thomas, this is moon-madness. I pray you be a man, and hear reason. I never told you that a fiend taught me how to make the android."

"Thou didst! I say thou didst, and thou didst! In Italy thou didst learn it of him."

"In Italy? What! *He* the fiend? That mad scholar, sunken into the depths of knavery and insanie, that charlatan, that cheat, that" —

"Ay, brave it out! But well I know where all thy knowledges come from, — thy mathematics, thy burning-glasses, thy exploding powders, thy inflammable air, all thy devil's arts which thou didst persuade me were of nature, to the peril of my soul's salvation, and which thou didst learn of the fiend who walks the earth in the guise of a Paduan! Ay, and he taught thee to make the andrew, which may the blessed saints assoil me for having holped thee in, — St. Francis, St. Becket, St. Dunstan, St. Wittikind, St. Dubric, St. Thomas à Kent!"

"Peace, Thomas, peace! You rave, you scatter foam on your beard. Peace, I say! What madness is this? Did I not upbraid this mad Paduan to his face? Did I not refuse to do his bidding? Did I not speed after him with the iron in my hand, to make him return and unmask his wretched cheatery? Did I not?"

"Did I not, did I not, did I not! Thou vile sorcerer, cease thy gibble-gabble! Ay, didst thou, and it was in thy pride thou didst refuse him, and flout him, and chase him; for thou hadst learned all his secrets, and wouldst set up to be the match of the fiend himself! Tell me he was not the fiend! Hearken to the tempest.

And doth he not always come in tempest? Well I knew the fiend was abroad in the air this day, — ay, in the air, where he told thee he lodged; and thou saidst nothing, hoping it would escape my notice! Thou wretch! To deal thus with the soul of a Christian man, and a frère of the Lord's flock to boot! Ay, and did not the very room darken when he came in, and the door shut of itself, and the storm rage with thunder and lightning, and Cuthbert, with no more wit than a dog in him, know of his coming every time? Ay, and 't is well known that dogs know when the fiend is nigh, and tell it by their howlings."

Bungy gasped, overcome with the fury of his utterance, and Bacon felt an appalling sense of the difficulty of reasoning down this mass of evidence in the mind of the ignorant and obstinate being before him, whose whole superstitious nature had been roused into its fullest activity by the succession of weird coincidences, and by the aspect and actions of the Paduan. In that brief pause he called into review all that had been said and done for the last few hours, and saw that everything told against him. Yet he resolved to contend with everything.

"Hearken now to me, Thomas," he said solemnly, "for what I say to you is the truth, and I swear it by this cross."

He put his hand to his girdle to uplift the

cross which hung at the end of his rosary. The rosary was not there.

"Ach!" yelled Bungy, "thou hast made a compact with the fiend, and he will not let thee wear the blessed cross, thou sorcerer! Ach, ach! fie upon thee, thou foul wretch!"

"'T is false!" cried Bacon in a pealing voice, recovering from the stunning blow dealt his cause by the absence of the rosary. "Forbear your craven epithets, — thrice craven when thus bestowed upon me in my hour of utter misery, when ruin has fallen upon the work I wrought for England! I swear by the blessed Saviour, whose name no sorcerer, if such there were, could take upon his lips, that what I say to you is true!"

Bungy was silent, for the indignant solemnity of this utterance touched him even then.

"Hear me now," sternly continued Bacon, following up his advantage. "I have never dealt with any fiend, nor is that evil Paduan a fiend, and this I swear by my soul's assurance of salvation."

A rattling bolt of thunder split the air as he spoke the last words, and Bungy started furiously.

"Ach, ach!" he yelled, shaking his fists, "a sorcerer's oath, — a sorcerer's oath! Thou swearest by thy soul's damnation, and truly it is assured, — truly it is!"

"I said 'salvation'!" cried Bacon.

"Thou liest! Thou saidst 'damnation,' and I heard thee plainly. Thou meantest to say the other, but the fiend would not let thee. Ay, and 't was his thunder attested thy perjury then" —

"Hear me, hear me, hear me! I said it not. I said" —

"Thou didst! Thou" —

"I did not!"

"Thou liest! Thou didst! And thou art in pact with the fiend!"

"Oh, hear me, hear me! He is not the fiend" —

"I say he is, and I do know it! Did I not see him no more than wave his arms, and Cuthbert came running with his cap and sword? Did I not" —

"And what of that? It was a marvel, but it has its cause in nature. Is it incredible that a man should have by nature the power to draw another man to him, when an ore of iron, as you know, has by nature the power to draw to it other iron? Hear me explain" —

"Explain! Thou ready-witted wretch! No, I will not hear thee. Thou wilt explain, too, that the fiend Simara rent not the andrew!"

It all rushed into Bacon's mind in an instant: the mandate of the Paduan to Simara; the almost immediate shivering of the brittle alloy of

the image, as if in obedience to that mandate; and, beating down the half-risen superstition that a spirit had indeed wrought the ruin, the conviction that Malatesti had had prevision of the approaching catastrophe, and had turned it to his purposes. In an instant all this came upon him, and the next he firmly answered: —

"Simara did not rend the android. It was the lightning. There was no Simara."

"Oh, thou liar! Did I not hear his voice?"

"No. 'T was the Paduan's voice. It was a trick, — a cunning ventriloquy."

"Ach, thou sorcering liar, — thou Simon Magus! And the gold tongue which burst fire and vanished, — thou wilt say that was ventrilly, or some such word of Mahound, wilt thou not?"

"I tell you it was nothing but a tongue of metal, which he had filled with a detonating powder."

"Powder, powder! Prate not to me of powders. They are all of the fiend, like thy nitre and coal powder. Face me out that he was not the fiend, and he coming in from the rain as dry as a basket!"

"He had been under shelter. He had been standing under the covered portal, beyond a doubt. He had" —

"He had, he had, he had! Cease thy damned gibble-gabble, thou ready-witted varlet!"

"Enough," said Bacon, with despairing sadness. "Say no more. I forgive you. All evil happenings are as nothing to this; even the ruin of the android is as nothing. Well may I mourn the hour when the Paduan came here, since his coming has wrenched from me you, whom I loved not for any parts or learning, but for the good heart, faithful and true to me through many, many years, nor ever joining till now in the reproaches and revilings others, greater than you, have cast upon me. But I blame you not, and I forgive you. I forgive, too, him who has thus wrought upon you. May" —

"My good heart!" roared Bungy, interrupting. "My good soul, I say! Think of that! My good soul's salvation imperiled by its beguilement into thy devil's trap of sorcery! Dost think I will stay loyal to thee when I am likely to be packed into hell for it? By Swithin, but I will not, then? Dost think" —

"Nay, Thomas, speak not now in your anger. Wait till the morning, when you can think more calmly of this."

"Wait till the morning! By all the saints, but I will not wait at all! I will at once go hence, for it perils my soul to abide even to upbraid thee!" and Bungy immediately tucked his skirts under his arms as preparation for instant departure.

"Hold, hold!" cried Bacon, clasping his hands in entreaty. "Go not now. The storm is terrible. Wait till it lulls; then go in peace. See, I will leave you alone. I will retire to another chamber."

"I will not abide another moment under the roof with thee!" furiously bellowed the friar. "I will go hence, and I will proclaim thee everywhere as a sorcerer who sought to lure mè to my soul's ruin!"

"Hear me!" entreated Bacon. "You have sworn on the cross not to betray aught of this ruined enterprise."

"Ay, and I will keep my Christian oath for the love of England, whose weal has been brought to wrack by thee!" cried Bungy. "But I will go hence, and proclaim thee as one who has had commerce with the fiend in the guise of a Paduan. And I will" —

"Hear me, I beseech you, hear me! Good frère, good Thomas, I pray you by the remembrance of all our years of peace, for De Montfort's sake, for England's sake, for the sake of" —

"Ach, thou viper, thou wretch, thou sorcerer, thou devil's commercer, thou abhorred, abominable, impious, unclean thing! Ach, fie upon thee, fie upon thee! and aroint thee, aroint thee! I renounce thee forever!"

He rushed from the room, gnashing his teeth, with a visage like that of a lubber fiend in his rage, and in a moment the outer door slammed heavily behind him. He was gone.

For an instant Bacon stood motionless; then all gave way, — the chamber whirled around him, he tottered backward, a mighty darkness reeled down upon him like an avalanche, and he fell on his pallet in a dead swoon.

Life rewakened, dreaming in the long ago. There was a sense that sleep had been deep and restful; an incorporeal lightness; a trance of coolness and quiet; fresh, still glimmerings; the world silently returning, peaceful and sweet and strange; the old heavenly innocence of childhood; the dewy early years at Ilchester; the tranquil, dark summer dawn. Bacon was lying in his bed, dimly awake, half conscious, as he lay with closed eyes, that his mother was bending over him, tender of the slumbers of her boy. A vague remembrance that he had dreamed she was long dead, mingling with the dim deliciousness of his love for her, melted into his luxury of repose, and, with a flitting sense of trouble, he sighed. His eyes were open, and his mind had gathered vacancy.

"Dost revive, Roger?"

It was broad day, and the morning sunlight lay aslant in the room. The words lingered, dis-

tinct and alien, in his tranced memory. Then he knew that he was lying on the pallet, and that a hooded friar was bending over him.

"Adam?"

"It is I," answered De Marisco, his voice sounding grave and kind from beneath his cowl.

As in a dream, Bacon felt himself raised to a half-recumbent position, with his head resting upon the friar's breast. A strong spicy cordial was held to his lips, and, drinking, he was revived. A few minutes passed in silence, and, lying with closed eyes, the memory of his waking vision faded, leaving him with the sad and world-worn heart of manhood, and the mournful remembrance of the dark events of yesterday in his clouded soul.

"Art better now, Roger?"

"I am better," he answered feebly.

How dim, remote, confused, was his sense of everything around him! It seemed as if he were tended by some kind phantom, whose voice and touch were the only things that linked it in identity with his friend. He hardly knew how, but he was sensible that time had passed, and that he had drank again, and was sitting in a chair, with a sort of weak strength and the feeling of distance and dimness in his mind. The phantom was sitting near him, and he felt a strong, kind hand clasping his own with friendly distinctness. Then the grave voice sounded clearly.

"What hath happened, Roger? The miscarriage of the work I know, for as I came hither I met Frère Bungy, who told me a graceless tale. I bade him go seal his fool's lips, or look to it. Tell me what hath befallen, brother."

That which had befallen rested separate and definite in Bacon's memory, and, with an utter introversion of his faculties, he mechanically related all. Ceasing, he had a strange, dazed consciousness that he had been speaking, and that the form near him had listened silently.

"We have failed, Roger," he heard him say. "I grieve that you have thus suffered. But the wild night is now passed, and to-day is new and fair. Be comforted, brother. Time repairs all ill happenings."

There was a brief interval of silence.

"For the present," resumed De Marisco, "all is done. I will aim to silence this Bungy. Yet, should he talk, inquiry and trouble may follow. You must stay only for food, and then at once away to Paris. Here is a gift of money Robert Grostete bade me deliver to you for the work. That is ended. Use the coin, then, for your departure. I will take charge of the house, and acquaint the bishop of what hath passed. He will make good your absence."

Bacon mechanically received the small leathern

bag the other placed in his hand, and as he did so a keen, forlorn sense of sorrow welled up within him.

"Alas, alas," he said bitterly, "is this the end? To think that we have failed, and failed from such a circumstance! Had not the Paduan entered then, the work would have been shrouded and removed to the recess, where the lightning would not have rived it. Thus ever comes disaster. This dark fool, this charlatan, this mad ape of hell, he comes, he arrests our purposes for a few moments, and all is ruined. Oh, that the weightiest enterprises should be always subject to slight occasions! But it is ever so. Thus ever dies the good cause."

"Brother, the good cause never dies," said the grave voice.

"You are right," faltered Bacon, after a short interval. "I meant defeated."

"Brother, the good cause never is defeated."

Bacon bowed his head in silence. A thrill of strong comfort stole through the torpor of his veins; a trembling peace melted across his desolation as the dawn melts across a winter moor. Silently he clasped the hand in his, and the minutes mutely wore away.

"It is well," he said tremulously. "I will depart. Let me only gather up my few manuscripts, summon poor Cuthbert, and go. Poor

Cuthbert, indeed! He was much terrified last eve, and needed comforting. How looked he, Adam, when he unbarred to you?"

He received no answer, but he felt the kind hand close with a tenderer pressure, and, looking up, he saw that the cowled head was bent low.

"Adam, what is it? Is not Cuthbert well?"

There was a solemn pause.

"Brother," said the grave voice gently, "he is well."

Bacon gazed at him for a moment; then his head drooped slowly, and he wept. A poor, uncomely, dog-witted thing, weakest of the weak, lowest of the low, but something that had loved him, something that was faithful to him, and with a dog's faithfulness and love.

"Is it thus with you, my poor servitor?" he sorrowfully murmured. "Rest, rest. 'T is better so. Ill can never come nigh you any more, nor fear strike away the life that was so harmless here. Adam, I pray you see that he has decent burial. He loved and served me better, for all his darkened wit, than men the world calls his betters. He had been my brother's thrall, but I took the collar from his neck, for I like not that any man, however weak of mind, should wear the collar of a slave. So give him a freeman's sepulture, the money for which I will leave with you."

"It shall be done," said De Marisco.

They rose. A little while Bacon stood, sadly musing, and a light of peace dawned upon his wasted features.

"It comes to me now," he said humbly and dreamfully. "I have sinned, and it is well the android lies shattered. To make a king believe in supernature were also to spread his belief throughout the realm, and not even to save the land from tyranny were it well to confirm it in superstition. That were to relieve it from a great evil to curse it with a greater. Better fail of good by truth than win it by falsehood."

"It may be so," returned De Marisco thoughtfully.

"It *is* so," said Bacon firmly. "Welcome all suffering, all loss, all disaster, for through them has my erring soul been schooled, and I have learned the lesson that will never leave me. Yes, it is so. Through Truth alone we truly conquer. Only Truth's victories are true."

A few hours later, and the great friar had left St. Botolph's wharf in a ship for Paris, where he wrote the Opus Majus, his undying claim to the gratitude of man. A few years later, and Simon De Montfort had drawn the unwilling king into an alliance by which a reluctant royal sanction was obtained for the measures which broadened justice and freedom throughout the

land. Not such an alliance as the brazen android would have achieved, — immediate, desired by the monarch, and potential with his active will, — but one in which he was passive and frigid, and one obtained only after long delay, when the hostile faction, under Prince Edward's leading, had grown to a power that plunged the land in civil war, and sent the great earl's soul to God from the dark slaughter of Evesham. But De Montfort's death sealed the strife for the charter. In the mind of the people he stood crowned with the sainted hero's gloriole, an image of fiery inspiration for the principles he lived and died for, mightier thus in his death than in his life; and from that hour the liberties of England were secured. For the good cause never dies, and it is never defeated. Its defeats are but the recoils of the battering-ram from the wall that is fated to crash in; its deaths are like those of Italian story, where each man cloven in twain by the sword of the slayer springs up two men, mailed and armed to slay.

THE CARPENTER.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

I.

It was the winter of the year when the armies of Grant and Lee were locked in the death-grapple for Richmond, and the night of war, involved in incertitude and disaster, with lurid gleams of hope leaping and vanishing like cannon flashes in the smoke of conflict, was yet, unknown to any, darkly working into its triumphant dawn.

At that time there stood, as there still stands, in the open country a few miles north of Washington, the estate familiarly known round about as Elkanah Dyzer's Place, — a place owned by an old gentleman-farmer of that name, and occupied by him and his old wife and their sons. A pleasant place to see at any time, but chiefly in the growing seasons, or in rich summer light, with its ample slopes of well-tilled farm and orchard land spreading back from the dusty high-

way; the light-green crops in ordered rows and plots upon the dry-brown soil, — the pennoned maize, the wheat, the garden products; the gnarled old apple-trees, and peach and pear trees, laden with their fruitage; here, a deep-green pasture field, with kine and horses feeding; there, the dusky distant barns; and beyond, master of all, and set far back from the highway, to which its flank was turned, the large and quaint old two-story brick dwelling, painted in a neutral tint made more indefinite by age, and relieved against a broad depth of dark umbrageous woodland, towering on the other side; high-studded in its rooms, but seeming disproportionately low because of its great length; with stunted chimneys, and a short, sharp pitch of forward roof, scooping from the ridge-pole in a long descending sweep to the dwarfed back end, — a place upon which one might gaze satisfied, and dream the old Virgilian dream of teeming earth, and bees, and perfumed breezes; and the odorous breath of kine; and herbs and grass; and the contented low of oxen; and milk from amber udders foaming in the pail under the rosy-circled star; and sun-browned labor, and the deep smile of harvests; and life robust, and sweet, and sane; and home, with rustic cheer, with friends, with kindred, the sweet and hardy wife, the sprawl and laugh of sturdy babes, wealth, joy,

large-handed hospitality; and plenty flowering over the ravages of battle, and peace emerging with full sheaves of blessings and songs and gifts and garlands from the cloven heart of war.

Now, however, the place lay dim, in the winter light of Christmas Eve. The night had set in. Here and there, remote and at wide distances, were solitary and sullen gleams in the murk from the windows of other dwellings. No sound came from the bosom of the dark peace, the deep tranquillity, the winter loneliness, nor was there any motion save that of a cold and gentle breeze moving noiselessly through the obscure and frozen air. But under the vast night-blue, thick-studded with the innumerable stars, and beyond the uncertain shapes of bushes and low trees, and the dark swales of the farm, the dim old house showed joyously, with all its lower windows overflowing with festal light, and every curtain drawn away, as if that the living radiance, composed of the steady beam of lamps and the jovial dance of open fires, might the more comfort the darkness. If aught there were to chequer its sentiment of Christmas cheer, it was in the aspect of one window in the forward end, upon whose panes the lustre of firelight, only, flashed and failed duskily, sometimes quivering up with a bright struggle, then sinking into a

dark glow, like a sense of the felicity of the season laboring in an old man's breast with shadows of trouble and care.

A moment, and the fire upon that hearth, leaping in evanescent gleams amidst the snakes of smoke which coiled and swirled around the huddle of logs and fagots heaped in the cavernous chimney, and conjoined in one great smoky serpent which fled, writhing, up the flue, flapped out in sheets with a dense, crackling roar, swallowing them all, making the burnished brass tops of the straddling fire-dogs shine like balls of gold, and filling with a flood of tawny splendor the large old-fashioned room, antiquely furnished, odorous with the dry sweetness of the abundant wreaths of ground pine which adorned it, and so shadowed on walls and ceiling with red-berried, dark-green branches that it looked like a cave of holly. At once there was a sudden movement among the family all gathered there, sitting or standing in a group a little distance from the hearth, watching the fire; and old Elkanah Dyzer himself, who had remained for some time in his huge oaken chair, with his hands upon his knees, and a look of peevish gloom upon his massive and resolute features, suddenly sprang up, six feet four, mighty in brawn and magnificent in stalwart age, cut three clear pigeon wings in the air with all the grace

and agility of his youth of twenty-one, and came down lightly on the floor in a grand attitude, with a snap of his fingers like a pistol crack, a proud toss of his haughty head, a stormful and generous laugh, and deep from his full-breathed lungs a ringing "Whoop! and aha for the good fire!"

There was a general stir and a murmur of soft, mingling laughter, and all eyes were turned on the old man admiringly. His son, John Dyzer, a tall, erect, reticent-looking young man, with black mustache and the military air derived from his year's service as a Union volunteer at the opening of the war, straightened from his lounging posture near the mantelpiece, and watched his father with half-suppressed approving mirth flushing his impassive and handsome visage. His wife, Emily, a lovely blonde, dressed in white and cherry ribbons for the evening, who was sitting on a low seat on the other side of the fireplace near her daughter, Lilian, turned her charming head to gaze on the old giant; her gentle face, framed in its drooping gold-brown tresses (and a little pale and wan, as became the mother of two children, one dead), lighting with amusement, her lips parting to show the smiling teeth, and a deeper lustre glowing in her blue, earnest eyes; and the tiny Lilian, sitting by her in a small rocking-chair, a

fair and chubby tot of five years old, in a blue dress, with short yellow curls, and pale, pensive countenance, the infant Madonna of a stiff rubber doll which she was rocking to its staring sleep, dropped this diabolical fetich of all girl-babyhood, to clap her small hands, crimsoning with glee; while the youngest son, Tom, — a fine, lissome, innocent, ruddy young fellow of twenty, deep in the bashful tremors and despondencies of first love for pretty Fanny Redwood — a guest from the city, now upstairs at her toilette — and actually with a crick in his neck from having kept his head for about twenty minutes turned over his shoulder, as he sat with outstretched legs, and hands in his pockets, watching for her to come down, — quite forgot her for about a quarter of a minute, and laughed long and loud; and a happy smile appeared even upon the sad, calm face of old Mrs. Dyzer, turned with its tight lace cap and brown hair streaked with gray, to gaze at her good man, — a face comely yet, in spite of years and sorrow, stately even in its smiling with the dignity of suffering borne in silence, — she who rarely smiled now since the loss of her two sons, — George, a soldier of the Union, reported missing at Fredericksburg, and long given up as dead; Rupert, the first-born, a soldier in the rebel army, never heard from, banned by his father, his name forbidden to be spoken in that house forever.

"I can't do it like you, father," said John Dyzer curtly, his mind upon the marvelous pigeon wing. "Old man's ahead of me yet. Young man's nowhere."

"Guess there's no young men now-a-days like father," said Tom admiringly.

Elkanah Dyzer smiled like an old lion flattered by his cubs, showing his teeth, every one of the thirty-two still white and sound; glanced down at himself in his evening party costume of brown old-fashioned clothes, double-breasted buff vest, and frilled shirt-bosom, with which his big hand toyed; passed the hand over his smooth-shaven healthy-colored face, and up on the ample dome of his bald head, and down to the locks of short, curly gray hair, which still pretty thickly fringed his temples; and then, as one satisfied that he was in good trim, moved his proud visage slowly around, smilingly surveying the group with broad, blue eyes, well opened under their high-arched shaggy brows.

"Father Dyzer, I believe you're as vain as any peacock," said John's wife, Emily, in her most charming voice.

Elkanah's face instantly put on that look of helpless confession, which the strongest of the sons of men assume, and fancy bland indifference, when detected by a woman.

"Can't do that?" he said, reverting to the

pigeon wing with the idea of regaining lost ground. "Why, that 's very easy. So." And he did it again.

"Oh, vanity ! vanity ! " exclaimed Emily, with charming mockery. "Father Dyzer, you want to tempt me to ask you to dance with me this evening."

Little Lilian at once crimsoned with intense elfin merriment.

"Oh, grandpa 's going to dance with mamma ! " she cried, in her small silvery voice. "Grandpa, are you going to dance with my mamma when the neighbors and friends come in ? "

"Neighbors and friends ! Hah ! well discriminated ! " muttered the old man with a snort. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. Semi-Union neighbors and semi-secesh neighbors. Six-water grog, anyway. How many friends, we 'll know before long, — before long."

His face darkened for an instant into savage gloom ; then, with a toss of his head, he smiled his leonine smile.

"Dance with your mamma, midget ? " he went on in his sounding voice. "No ; can't dance with her. Besides, she 'd rather dance with somebody else, — with Faulkner."

Emily bent her head quickly, and, spite of herself, colored scarlet. The old man looked

slowly around, serenely smiling, with a purring satisfaction, feeling, with a sort of innocent vindictive complacency, that he had paid her back at the rate of a four-hundred-pound shot for a very small bullet. In an instant she looked up, lightly laughing, with a quick glance at her husband. His eyes were intently bent upon the floor; a slight frown dented his forehead, and his face was cold and grave. As she saw his look, a spasm of almost hate for him contracted her heart, and quivered away in a hurt feeling and a flood of passionate love, the light laughter all the while upon her face and lips.

"Faulkner?" she said gayly. "Why, father Dyzer, I like my old sweetheart, Faulkner, very much, especially because he 's such a friend of John's, and so dear to us all; but I 'd as lief dance with you as him, and I 'd rather dance with my own husband than either of you."

John Dyzer's face did not change, and, as one not hearing what was said, he slowly walked away. Emily's heart recoiled, and became like stone against him. Still smiling gayly, she suddenly became aware that old Elkanah was staring down at her with open mouth and features all wreathed in glee.

"Why, hear the girl!" he burst out, with a jovial roar. "There 's a girl now! There 's a speech for you! She 'd rather dance with her

own husband than either of us! Spoken like a lady! John, you dog, why don't you down and kiss your wife for that, like a man!"

"Tut, father, — tut, tut, tut, tut, tut," replied John Dyzer. Emily could have stabbed him.

"What! you won't! Then, by Gadger and Badger, I will!" cried the old man, laughing. "And would, with the lumbago!"

He made one stride that shook the floor, and would have stooped to kiss her, but she sprang up from her low seat, glowing like a rose, and, smiling like an angel, flung her arms around him, and kissed him again and again; then dancing backward, suddenly turned, and flew from the room with a speed that swept the air into perfume behind her flying skirts, and made the abundant sprays of holly tremble.

Elkanah stood, open-mouthed, flushed, the hot tears very near his eyes, staring, like one dazed, into the passage where she had vanished, full of affection for her, full of stupefaction, and, in the general whirl of his faculties, puzzling his very unfeminine man's head to know what it all meant.

"By the gods of war!" he muttered to himself, "something 's the matter with that girl. Now, what 's up?"

He turned again to the fire, and stood cogitating.

"Well, grandpa," suddenly arose with entire irrelevance the small silvery voice, "the question is, who *are* you going to dance with?"

She said it so queerly, and with such gravity and earnestness, that Elkanah, used as he was to her old-fashioned ways, rolled his eyes down at her, vacantly wondering.

"Dance with?" he returned in a moment. "With you, little midget."

She looked very sorrowful instantly, and shook her curly head slowly.

"No, grandpa, not with me, because I 'm too lame this evening, — too lame. See, now." And rising, with the stiff doll in her arms, she limped to and fro for his inspection; then gravely sat down again in her little rocking-chair, with a face pensive and pale.

John Dyzer, who was softly and slowly pacing the room, paused in his walk, then coming to his little girl, bent down, like the good and tender father that he was, and kissed her very fondly; and she, abruptly dropping dolly to fling her little arms around his neck, murmured, "My only papa."

She had once fallen, and fractured her ankle, and was sometimes troubled now with a swelling of the knee, which made her lame.

"Never mind, Lily," said her father. "When the children come, you 'll have a good time play-

ing with them. And you 'll get well, and dance, one of these days — dance like a jumping-jack — dance like grandpa himself."

"No more dancing for me!" broke forth Elkanah from his ruminations; "not till my boy George comes home. Then I 'll dance. But that 'll never be — never — never!"

He turned his back to the fire, and stood with his hands behind him, absently musing. Every one was silent. In a moment, his wandering eyes happened to rest upon the face of his wife.

She was sitting in her sober dress, her hands placidly folded together, her patient and noble features composed and calm; but on her cheeks, in the tawny firelight, was the glisten of tears.

"Why, what is it, dear old lady?" said Elkanah, in a booming undertone. "What ails the old man's darling? Ah, I forgot, — thinking of George."

"Of both," she said calmly.

Elkanah's massive features darkened, though but for an instant.

"Always the same," he said, almost harshly. "Oh, woman — womankind! Yet, when he talked of going, your anger was beyond all. And when he went, it almost broke your heart. Now, after all he 's done, — after all the bitterness and trouble he 's brought upon us in our old age, — your spirit 's soft for him."

"And yours, too, Elkanah," she said quickly.

"I stamp it down!" returned the old man fiercely. "I can't help a feeling, now and then. Nature tussles in me, thinking of the good, sweet boy I had before he got to be the ingrate son, the vile rebel, the breaker of our hearts, the dishonor of my house, the traitor to his country. But I stamp it down!" he hissed, striking his foot upon the floor. "Oh, the villain! By the Everlasting! if he ever darkens this threshold, I 'll lay him dead!"

"Hush, Elkanah!" cried his wife, with a flashing eye, and her face roused and severe. "Recollect yourself! My children are always my children. No such language before me. Such words put you far from me, — farther even than your thought of him has already put you. Now, silence!"

The old man shrunk a little, shrugged his shoulders, and relapsed into sulky quietude.

"It 's the only thing that has ever come between us," he said presently, in a sort of grieved growl, and with a peevish and grumbling visage. "The only thing. Well, few old married folks can say as much as that. Now, this comes from talking of forbidden subjects. And I was wrong to *say* anything, anyway. Ruth, my dear," — he stepped forward, smiling, with his left hand in his frilled bosom and the other

extended, and stood in courtly attitude, his right leg well advanced, bowing to his wife with the magnificent old-time courtesy, — "your pardon. Forgive the hot old man. Let it be peace between us. On Christmas Eve, my dear, — on Christmas Eve."

For a moment she did not move. Then slowly, with a faint flush still on her severe countenance, she reluctantly put her left hand into his. He hesitated a second, then bent and kissed her fingers, stepped backward with a grandiose bow, and stood in silence.

"Going from me," he presently murmured to himself, shaking his head mournfully. "After all these many years. Wealth, home, friends, — all going; the family breaking up, the old ties, the old existence, all going. And the old wife going too."

There was a sound of rustling dresses and soft footsteps on the stairs.

"Hah!" he burst out again, abruptly reviving, with a laugh, "here she comes! O Muse of Poetry, descend! Here 's Fanny Redwood! Lovely as the dawn. The blush-rose is coming, with her rose dress on. And it 's — Oh, that I were young again! A bachelor I 'd be. And Fanny 'd have a suitor. For she 'd just suit me."

Amidst the delivery of this impromptu effu-

sion, and the general laughter and applause which followed, a lovely young girl, curtseying, smiling, and blushing, entered the room, followed by Emily. She was of middling stature, and beautifully formed; had dark hair and eyes; a heart-shaped face, suffused with delicate bloom; an innocent red mouth; an air dreamful and maidenly; and moved with motions like caresses, naturally and often curtseying, and graceful as a solitary doe. She was exquisitely attired in a soft, rose-colored silk, with lace corsage, which glistened in the tawny sheen of the fire, and was altogether as fair a creature as ever stood beneath the dark-green holly. Tom instantly took his hands out of his pockets, and rose, advancing, and drooping from his unconstrained posture into about as awkward a young man, conscious of his boots and solicitous of his neck-tie, as breathed in the District of Columbia. To add to his distress, the lovely Fanny, as he drew near her, and an interview seemed inevitable, somehow glided past him with one of her soft caressing curtseys in the most natural way in the world, leaving it only open to him, in decent self-respect, to walk on to the wall, and stand gazing with a rueful countenance, as if it was what he meant to do from the first, at the crossed American flags, drooping in looped folds, with the tattered and broken regimental flag his

brother John had carried into battle hanging there between them, surrounded with deep garlands of ground-pine and holly branches.

"There!" rang his father's voice, as the flagged and garlanded wall suddenly darkened. "Down goes the fire again. Upon my soul, Tom, I believe you let Daniel Snow pick out green wood for the hearths. Phew! Just see the smoke!"

"I did n't, father," replied Tom, looking at the logs, from whose red glow great serpents of smoke were down-shooting, and coiling over backward, to conjoin with the huge boa which fled whirreting up the chimney. "It 's just the same wood that 's in the other rooms; and that burns well enough."

The old man glanced to his right through the open door of the adjoining room, and from thence to the room beyond, both of which were in full illumination; then went across the lighted entry into the room opposite, and saw that the two rooms beyond that were also all ablaze.

"Well," he said, coming back, "old uncle Peter Dyzer, if his ghost walks to-night, must satisfy his love of a free fire in every room but this. Hola! here it comes again!"

And as he spoke, out flapped the roaring flame once more, and lit with full splendor the leafy chamber. Elkanah rubbed his hands gleefully, and took out his great gold watch.

"Six o'clock," he announced. "A good hour yet before any one comes, unless it 's Faulkner in from town."

He had hardly spoken, before there was a loud rat-tat-too at the hall door. The old man glanced behind him at the side door, which led directly into the room.

"I wonder if that 's Faulkner," he said smilingly. "He 's usually in on us from this side. Here you, Tom; you 've left a hatchet on the hearth. Take it away now."

"Yes, father — in a minute," responded Tom, intent upon his charmer, and forgetting the mandate directly.

Presently the old negro, Daniel Snow, man-of-all-work on the estate, with others, was seen shuffling through the passage, in full company rig, to the door. A moment, and there was a bounding step, a mellow laugh, and a rich, gay, quick, melodious voice, intermingling with the soft quacking African responses of the delighted Daniel.

"A five-dollar greenback for old Daniel." ("Yes, sah; thank ye, sah.") "Knocked just to bring him on for my Christmas gift." ("Yes, sah; yes, sah.") "Five for him, if he comes, said I." ("Yes, sah.") "With a merry Christmas to his good old heart." ("Yes, sah; the same, sah. Much obleeged, sah.") "And a merry Christmas to all here!"

With the last words, young Faulkner danced over the threshold, in elegant costume, and stood with indescribable cordial grace, his extended kid-gloved hands thrown open in playful greeting, while the phantom of black Daniel, wagging his up-thrown, mirthful head, and showing all his ivories, crossed the passage behind him. The next second he had crumpled off his gloves with an air of sleight of hand, and was moving, amidst a tumult of welcomes, from person to person, with laughing fascination and gay, tender charm. Of middle height; slender, sinewy, and elegant; a figure that naturally fell into beautiful and alluring attitudes; with light-brown curling locks, half shading his low, dense, passionate forehead; dark glances, witching and melancholy; ruddy cheeks; high nose; a manly mustache coquettishly up turned at the ends; a beautiful laughing mouth; a bold, but dimpled chin. Well might women love him! But, Scipio-Hylas that he was, he kept them all at bay. Brave, sweet, loving, joyous, ardent, amative, proud, generous; well-read, well-bred, proficient in every manly exercise; one who fenced, danced, sang divinely, wrote charming verses, talked brilliantly, had in him the slumbering spells of eloquence; one good at a hunt, a regatta, on a horse, with a rifle; loving all pretty girls lightly and purely, none deeply; very gal-

lant and attentive to old women ; friendly to all men, and easily loved by them ; in great request and favor with everybody, chiefly with the ladies, for ball, theatre, opera, saloon, dinner, escort, commission ; a Paladin in the bud, but now a perfect squire of dames. Add, as a singular thing in one so amative, a young man of perfectly unspotted life. This, partly from excessive imagination, never realizing its ideal; partly from natural purity and haughty self-respect, disdaining to stoop below the vision; chiefly because in him, passion, — like ambition, like his gifts, his attainments, his latent power,— lay withdrawn and inert in a temperament of dream. Thus Michael Faulkner, at the age of twenty-six, strangely young in appearance, and looking like some lovely youth of twenty ; rich in his own right ; son of the old rich General ; once a sweetheart of Emily's, and for years a fast friend to John, to whom he had been the gayest and friendliest rival, and for whom he cherished a deeper attachment than was usual with him.

They were friends still. John met him like the rest, betraying no other sign of change towards him than might have been conveyed in a yet more iron grip of his strong hand. He was in that uncertain mood in which one, tortured by the deep suspicion that his beloved wife is

drifting from him into love with his bosom friend, — as yet suspicious of her only, and unable yet to determine whether the friend is also a just object for doubt, — suspends judgment on both in wary scrutiny.

What was the case? Subtle, and hard to state, — harder for many people to comprehend. There are seasons in a woman's life when her conjugal love, oppressed by the monotony, the commonplace, the humdrum, cold familiarity, the perpetual same intimacy, becomes not dead, but dormant, and existence, void of the old romantic joy, creeps on in weariness and indefinite sad yearning. In such a season, Emily, with perfect innocence, found a sudden and novel relief, fed by many sweet memories and associations, in the wild and tender fascinations that enhaloed Faulkner. He, for his part, drew unconsciously to her who in earlier days had deeply touched his fancy, but now was transformed to his imagination with all the added powerful pensive charm of her completed womanliness, the divine dower of the joys and griefs of her maternity. The mutual spell was strong; innocent in itself, they innocently yielded to it; and so far all was well.

What is this experience? Two — a man and a woman — friends, new-comers to an enchanting rural solitude, have wandered, an hour after their

arrival, to the banks of a strange stream. There is a boat tethered to the shore; let us enter, and push off a little way. How sweet to sit thus, hand in hand, lost in reverie, floating tranquilly in the purple evening on the bosom of the placid water! How sweet the dreamful drifting! how soothing the smooth-slipping flow of the bright tide! How lulling the even, all-pervading murmur in the trance of the sunset air! Ah, that gentle gliding is the flow of doom; that magic murmur is the roar of the cataract. They are in the current of Niagara!

Standing, sitting, walking about the room, taking his part in the talk and merriment, John Dyzer ever kept an eye upon his wife and friend. She was sitting in her low seat near little Lilian when Faulkner came in, and, with a mad pulse leaping in his own breast, her husband saw her bend her averted head over the child's dress, smoothing its folds, and marked the quicker palpitation of her bosom. It was only when Faulkner, in his tour of salutation among the group, paused, bowing, for an instant before her, that she looked up hurriedly, half timidly, into his face, smiling, with heightened color, her head drooping again as he passed by. This, too, her husband observed. And now with ever-increasing certainty in regard to both, and with a stern and solemn misery at his heart, he followed their

movements as they wandered about the room, and every little while for a moment drew together, and marked the recurring indefinite signs of love between them, — of love forever ending and beginning, retiring, advancing, and deepening on and on: he, pausing near her with clasped, drooping hands, and tender, clinging eyes, and all-imploring charm; she, rapt and innocent, immerged in reverie, with veiled and wandering glances, and bosom quicklier rising and falling, and paler bloom — the enchanted dream, the languor, the slumber, the relaxed postures, the tell-tale looks, the softer smiling, the lingering, low replies, the gracious silences — the unconscious lovers, lulled by the siren music of their hearts, unmeditating wrong, unthinking harm, vaguely entering the current of the sweet and terrible stream.

There was another observer, — old Elkanah. He had noticed for some time, in a rather purblind way, the thickening intimacy between Faulkner and Emily; and now, quickened by what had occurred within the few minutes past, his broad, blue eyes, under their pent-house brows, were vigilant upon the pair, and every moment a dreadful suspicion of what already existed, or was coming on, between them, slaked by his hearty fondness for Faulkner and his love for Emily, was kindling in his fiery brain. To

his other troubles, this one added, he thought, would be worse than all.

He had a way of talking to himself, alone or in company, in an inarticulate bass undertone, like the booming of some enormous bee; and presently, as first one and then another of the group roamed away across the passage into the rooms beyond, leaving him standing on the hearth, with only the little child sitting silently near him, it was in this voice that he entered upon a recapitulation of all that flung columns of darkness among the lights of his Christmas Eve.

"Something wrong, I fear," he said, "coming on, or come already, between Faulkner and Emily. Oh, house of troubles, troubles! But it can't be. There 'll be murder done on Faulkner if such a thing 's afoot. And what 'll become of Emily! And my son John going back to the war, with his life spoiled and his heart broken! And little Lily ailing, — perhaps to die, like the other. George lost and dead. Rupert worse than dead, if he 's living, — the infernal young, heart-rending villain! Everything going — going. Even poor little Tom 's got a girl that goes from him. All going together. And ruin hanging over me. The old home, where I 've lived so long, going from me in my old age. How can I ever break it to them! They 've got

to know that we must soon leave all to the auctioneer, and begin the world again, among strangers. Country going too, I 'm afraid. The blaze of victory lights the Shenandoah; but oh, the corpses, the corpses! Grant in the dead-lock at Richmond. Sherman's made the grand march, and now he 's in for the mad, belly-breaking wrastle. And the old wife going from me. Ah, that 's the worst — the worst of all! And I to keep up stout heart, and be merry and bold, on Christmas Eve! — the last here — the last — the last! Oh, my God! my God!"

He ceased abruptly, and sat down in Emily's low chair beside the child, his hands drooping between his knees, his gloomy visage bent upon the leaping antlers of the flame. For a little while there was complete silence in the hollied room, only broken by the murmur of distant voices and laughter from the other apartments.

"Grandpa," at length said little Lilian, in her plaintive voice, "I want to hear my 'Olian harp very, very much, indeed."

The old man smiled.

"Do you, darling? And so you shall, if the wind wills," he answered. "Let 's see. Where shall we put it, so that you won't get the draught? Here, I reckon."

He had risen as he spoke, and, taking from a shelf near by the Æolian harp, he opened the

window on the left-hand side of the fireplace, a little way, and set the instrument in the aperture; then resumed his seat and attitude beside the child.

For a minute all was still. But presently stole upon the silence, holy and solitary as the breaking dawn, the long, low strain of remote and thrilling sweetness, wild, delicate, and lonely, and hung hovering for a moment in the charmed air, then failed away in a dim, mysterious cadence, which, ended, yet seemed to linger, like the spirit of bright things departed, of tender summers gone.

Little Lilian listened with a face of breathless ecstasy. The wind harp was again still, remaining soundless in the minutes that followed, and the child finally resigned herself with a little sigh.

"Grandpa," she said presently, "what *was* Jesus Christ?"

The old man glanced at her smilingly, with his never-failing surprise at the oddity of her abrupt questions.

"A mechanic, my dear," he presently answered. "What our fine Southern gentlemen call a common mud-sill," he added sardonically. "A carpenter. God bless him!"

Lilian quietly sat, cogitating his reply, while the old man wagged his sturdy head, grimly

chuckling over the significance of his response with an enjoyment beyond words.

"Grandpa," the silver elfin voice began again, "will Jesus Christ come here this evening?"

Elkanah stared at her in blank wonderment, then burst into a bellow of laughter.

"Well, you *are* a young one!" he said, wagging his old head with hearty amusement. "If I ever heard the like of that! Now, what put that into your noddle, Lilykin?"

"I put it in my own self," she answered with intense positiveness. "But will he, grandpa?"

"Well, I don't know. He might," replied Elkanah jocosely.

"Because he 's alive, grandpa," earnestly pursued the child. "Old uncle Peter always said he was alive, and going round doing good. Only that he 'd grown old and gray walking in the world so many hundred years, — just as old loafer Tomeny painted his picture in there on the fireplace. And that 's all true, grandpa; ain't it?"

"Of course," replied the waggish Elkanah, tickled to his very midriff.

"Well, then, I guess he might come," continued the little prattler, with a satisfied air. "And I wish he would, for I want to see him very, very much."

Elkanah laid back his head, and roared and

shook with merriment. Finally, subsiding, mellowed to the core with mirth, he relapsed into his former position, his hands between his knees, his head bent forward, gazing at the elk-horned flames, and tittering secretly. The little girl sat sedately, taking it all with perfect seriousness.

"Now, sup-posing he was to come here this evening," she resumed, "and we was sitting here, and talking, and he should knock at the door, — and then, you know, we would n't hear him, grandpa."

The flames suddenly died down, involved in light-blue smoke, and the hearth gave forth a strange and lovely amber light upon the darkening room. At the same moment there was a faint, sweet chord of mysterious, trembling music from the harp.

"Well," said Elkanah, "what then?"

"Then," continued the child, "he would say, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.'"

The fire became so strangely low, and cast so weird a light, that the old man felt a sort of wonder creeping over him, and, without replying or moving from his crouching attitude, turned his face slowly around, with the singular glow and cross-bars of shade upon his features, and scanned the shadowed room, embowered in holly foliage, and hallowed by that dusky, amber

radiance. The distant voices had ceased, and the house was still. The unusual light, the breathless hush that lay upon all, surprised him, and he slowly turned his head back again, with a secret thrill.

At that moment there was a gentle knock at the door.

II.

Elkanah did not move, but only revolved his great eyes and stared in blank astonishment at the little girl. She sat very placidly, looking at the fire. There was a moment's pause.

"Come in," he boomed, in a stentorian tone.

At that instant a red cinder flew from the hearth, with a loud crack, upon Lilian's dress, and in the momentary alarmed diversion of his attention, as he hastened to fillip it back into the fire, the old man heard the opening and shutting of the door. It was with a feeling of vacant amaze, almost rising into fright, that, turning his head, as he did immediately, he saw a large, gray stranger standing in the room.

The old man rose slowly from his seat to his full height, with wondering eyes a-stare upon the new-comer. The latter stood composedly gazing at him. He was tall and stalwart, with uncovered head; a brow not large, but full, and

seamed with kindly wrinkles; a complexion of rosy clearness; heavy-lidded, firm blue eyes, which had a steadfast and draining regard; a short, thick, gray beard almost white, and thinly flowing dark-gray hair. His countenance expressed a rude sweetness. He was dressed in a long, dark overcoat, much worn, and of such uncertain fashion that it almost seemed a gaberdine. As he stood there in the gracious darkling light, he looked an image of long and loving experience with men, of immovable composure and charity, of serene wisdom, of immortal rosy youth in reverend age. A faint perfume exhaled from his garments. In the lapel of his coat he wore a sprig of holly. His left hand, in which he also held his shapeless hat, carried a carpenter's plane.

Elkanah stood, almost quaking inwardly in the presence of this august stranger, in whose aspect were singularly blended the prophet and the child. The child in him inspired love; the prophet, awe. He drew, and he repelled.

"This must be yours," said the stranger, in clear, slow accents, sweet and vibrating, extending, as he spoke, the implement in his hand. "I found it at your gate-post on the highway."

"Why, yes," faltered Elkanah, with a slight start, taking the plane. "Tom's work, I know. He was shaving away there where the gate shut

hard, and, just like the little love-daft noddy, he leaves the tool behind him."

"I am a wayfarer," said the stranger, after a pause, "and would like permission to remain with you a little while."

"Why, certainly. God bless me! what am I thinking of?" abruptly broke forth Elkanah, recovering immediately at the chance of offering hospitality, and beaming into smiles. "You are welcome, sir, right welcome. My name is Elkanah Dyzer. Sit ye down, sir, — sit ye down. Hah! Spang! up goes the merry fire!" he cried, laying the plane upon the mantel, and bustling forward his own oak chair for the stranger, as the blaze laughed upward with a flood of light. "You are right welcome. Your hand, sir," and, bowing with stately courtesy, he extended his own.

The stranger slowly took the proffered hand, with a pressure so gradual, so cordial, and so strong, that Elkanah felt it down deep into his very heart. As the sublime Scripture phrase has it, his bowels yearned to this new friend, and, despite the reverent distance which the lofty and sweet reserve of the stranger maintained, he felt a sudden intimacy as of many years, born from his quality of manly love. At the same time, his old brain was still in a daze of wondering confusion.

"Sit ye down, sir, — sit ye down," he chirruped, stepping backward with a wave of both hands; while the stranger, slow in all his motions, paused standing beside the chair. "And if I might not be thought over bold, sir," he went on, confusedly engaged with the odd coincidence of the stranger's advent and personal aspect with the child's words, "what might I call your na — occupation — the name of your occupation — no — yes — Oh dear me, dear me!"

And Elkanah tweaked his great eagle nose in comical bewilderment, somewhat dubious what he had asked for, but impressed that it was the name, after all, as he intended.

"I am a carpenter," said the stranger simply, in a rather low but distinct voice. "My name" —

"Ah, yes; excuse me," said Elkanah, unaware that he was interrupting, in the haste of his flurried belief that he had got the information he meant to ask for. "Carpenter. A name I like well, — as I do you, sir, if you 'll excuse an old man's frankness. Sit ye down, Mr. Carpenter. You are right welcome."

The stranger bent his grand and gentle head with a slow smile, like one amused at the new name, accidentally conferred upon him, yet well content to let it be so; and, tossing his shapeless hat upon a footstool in the angle behind the fireplace, took the oaken chair.

Little Lilian, who had been intently looking at him with an air of breathless satisfaction, and had not uttered one word, now rose, deposited dolly carefully upon his hat, limped back between his knees, and stood a-tiptoe, with her small arms upreached to him. He took her up instantly on his breast, and kissed her with a long kiss upon the mouth.

"I know who you are," she whispered eagerly. "And I won't tell nobody."

The stranger made no answer. She snuggled close upon his bosom and into his beard, for a minute or so, in perfect quietude; then suddenly clambered down, and resumed her seat in the little chair, with an air of confidential and solemn gratification.

"I declare," said Elkanah, softly laughing, and rubbing his hands as he sat down before the fire near the stranger, "it 's the queerest thing I ever knew. Do you know, Mr. Carpenter, you quite gave me a turn when you came in? I 've got the nerves of an ox, anyway, but I tell you I felt queerish for about the first time in my life. Well, now, it was the oddest thing! And by Gee and Dee, odd it is still!"

"I 'll tell you how it was," he continued, after a pause, before the slow-speaking carpenter could reply. "Little magpie, there, was twittering a lot of stuff we have over here a good deal

in the family. Of course, you never heard of my old uncle Peter Dyzer, —

'Old miser Dyzer, skin a fly, sir,
Sell the skin, and turn the money in,'

as the boys used to rhyme it about him. I inherited this fine old place from him. Well, of all the queer, odd, eccentric, funny old chaps that ever were — my, my! — But he was n't loony on a bargain, sir, — no, indeed; and he 'd plenty of hard horse sense, and took good care of his property, you can rely; but he had notions, sir, on some subjects, that would make you think him mad as any March hare you ever knew."

The old man paused, shaking with restrained mirth.

"You ought to have seen him," he resumed. "Tall, big-boned, dry as a chip in all his speech and ways; and plumed himself on a kind of resemblance he had to President Washington. On Sundays, sir, — he never went to church, — read Tom Paine, Volney, Diderot, Voltaire, and all the French fellows of those days, and hated clergymen (priests as he called 'em) worse than p'ison — swore by Tom Jefferson, too, in politics, and in everything else, except his knuckling under to slavery, — and there I 'm with him, sir, there I 'm with him. Well, sir, as I was saying, on Sundays he 'd rig himself out like President Washington, — claret-colored, square-

tailed coat, long satin vest, ruffles, knee-breeches, black silk stockings, buckled shoes, cocked hat, and so forth, — and take a walk all over the place, flourishing a gold-headed cane, peert as a lizard, sir, — peert as any lizard you ever saw. With a train of his darkeys behind him (he 'd buy 'em, take out their manumission papers, and keep 'em on wages; 'Lesson for bloody aristocrats,' he 'd say), — with a train of 'em behind him, in even line, the women first, — 'Mothers before men,' he 'd say; then the male adults; then the little girls; then the boys, ranged in their order down to the smallest walking pickaninny, — 'Brothers in Adam, sisters in Eve,' he 'd say. He at the head, flourishing his gold-headed stick, every now and then turning, and halting them to see if they were in exact line. 'Keep the straight line!' he 'd bawl; 'every real trouble in life comes from not keeping the straight line!' And if he saw one of 'em out of line, he 'd march down, pull ears if it was a girl; rap pates if it was a boy; punch her in the ribs with the gold head of his cane if it was a woman; and if it was a man, by George! he 'd pull him out, and thrash him like a sack, sir!"

And Elkanah drooped his head, shaking with silent inward laughter.

"That 's a sample lot of old Peter Dyzer," he resumed. "Lord, sir! I could sit here all night

and tell ye stories about him! Well, as I was going on to say, one of old Peter's fancies was pictures. He 'd got hold of an old loafer, Tomeny by name, a house-painter, as near as I could ever gather, with the strongest taste for apple-jack you ever knew in your life, and he kept him here to paint pictures for him, the horridest old daubs, — my sakes! I 'd like to show you a lot of 'em up garret, though they 're pretty well faded out now. But uncle Peter thought Tomeny the prince of painters, an unappreciated genius, and all that, — Tomeny the Great, he always called him, — and when he died, he buried him with a handsome gravestone at his poor old apple-brandy-soaked head, and on it just the words, 'Simon Tomeny, Painter,' as if that was enough for all posterity. Now, one of old Peter's maddest notions was that Jesus Christ was still alive, and grown old and gray with walking the earth for eighteen hundred years, as well he might, indeed. He 'd got hold of the old story of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, d' ye see. 'That 's him, — that 's Christ,' says old Peter. 'But, Mr. Dyzer,' one would say, 'that 's the man the story says Christ put a curse on, bidding him walk the world till he came again.' 'All a flam,' says rough old Peter; 'the Good Man,' — he commonly spoke of Christ as the Good Man, — 'the Good Man never

put a curse on any one. It 's Christ himself, I tell you.' Or, perhaps one might say, 'Why, Mr. Dyzer, what should Christ be going round the world for?' 'Going round doing good,' snaps uncle Peter. Ah, my Lord, my Lord! the mad old fellow! Well, sir, with his own hands — for old Peter was a shifty man — he put a facing of prime old oak on the chimney-place, in yonder; and d' ye know, he got old loafer Tomeny to paint on the right-hand side of it — an ugly thing to tell, sir, but it 's true — a portrait of himself as Judas, grasping the bag, — did you ever hear the like of that now? — and on the other side a figure of Christ, old and gray, as he fancied him. Tomeny's master-piece, he called it. Well, little humming-bird there was bringing up all this in my mind, as I said, and you can perhaps fancy the turn it gave me when you came in, with your gray hair and beard, and long coat, and the plane, and all that. And the queerest thing of all is, — I hope you 'll excuse me for saying so, for the picture is a wretched piece of imagery, as much as you can see of it for the faded colors, — the queerest thing is, that you *do* look something like the figure of Christ as old Tomeny has painted it."

And Elkanah again laughed softly, rubbing his hands, with his eyes on the silent-smiling carpenter, who had listened, as the old man

vaguely thought, with the air of one to whom the story was not entirely new.

"It 's a sort of pretty notion, too, that of old Peter's," presently resumed Elkanah. "And little chattering blue-jay, there, gave it quite a fairy turn in my mind by asking, just before you came, sir, if Jesus Christ, old and gray, was coming here to-night. Dear me! it made me laugh till I felt juicy all through; but it grew in me afterwards what a pretty thing it was, and for so young a child to say. Such a pretty thing! And how would *you* think of Christ, sir, as coming here to-night, if such a thing could be?"

"I think of him always," said the carpenter slowly, in solemn, sweet vibrations, "as the all-loving man. Yes, he might come, perhaps as you fancy him in this house, gray and old, — come as cheer-bringer, dispeller of evil, uniter of the estranged, assuager of sorrows, reconciler, consoler. Always the wise friend, the lover true. Something so."

The old man silently cogitated the reply, with eyes poring on the fire.

"Pardon the liberty," he said suddenly, "but what might your profession be?"

"I walk the hospitals," returned the stranger quietly.

"Nursing the Union soldiers?"

"Union and rebel," was the answer.

"I hope," said the old man, after a moment's pause, kindling and flushing a little with a faint misgiving, "I hope that you stand by the country, sir. Sir, this is a loyal house. One son only, my boy that once was, Rupert, — but we never mention his name here, sir, never, for he 's in the ranks of the rebels, — he only brings dishonor on the breed of old Elkanah Dyzer. But we strive to atone for it. My boy John served in the Union army, and he 's going again. My boy Tom wants to go, and shall. 'Wait, laddie,' I said a year ago, 'till your bones harden a little more; you 'll fight the better for it;' and the time 's come for him. My boy George" — his voice faltered — "was lost at Fredericksburg; and blown to bloody atoms on the field of battle, or alive rotting in some rebel prison, I 'm content and proud, for it 's in the service of his country. And I myself, old as I am, I 'm going too. The young eyes that saw the bright flag dance so long when everything laughed with promise, shall see it, now they 're old, flap defiance to the last as all goes down in war. There 's but one flag, one country, in the world for me. I stand by them both forever."

"What you say is well," answered the stranger. "I like what you say."

"Well!" retorted the fiery old man, "is there anything better?"

"There is nothing better than what you say," replied the other firmly.

Elkanah cooled down instantly, a little perplexed with the air the stranger had of cherishing some equal, perhaps more comprehending, truth.

"I don't know what it is draws me so to you, and makes me so free-spoken on a short acquaintance," he said presently, in a kind of marveling way. "If it was the Good Man himself, I could n't feel more open-hearted and like telling you all my troubles. I 've told you some already. You 'll stay with us this evening? Pray do!" he said hastily. "Spend the night. Stay some days. We 'll make you welcome. I want to know you better, sir."

"I thank you," said the stranger, "but I can only spend a little time with you, and must go my way this evening."

Elkanah looked rather rueful.

"Well," he said, brightening, "you 'll spend the evening, anyway. There 'll be a lot of people in, by and by, from round about. We 're to have a grand jollification in the old house. Ah me! The last — the last!"

The stranger looked at him inquiringly.

"I *will* tell you," said Elkanah, hurriedly hitching up his chair closer. "See here," he boomed in his undertone; "I have n't told any

one yet, but I 'll free my mind to you, for I feel to do it. Hish! I 'm a ruined man. A speculation — no matter what. It 's failed."

The stranger's lips parted, and his serene face looked almost roused.

"I shall have a little left. Not much," said the old man mournfully. "But we 'll have to sell this place where I 've lived so many years, and begin the world again, — in my old age, — seventy years old, sir, — seventy years. It 's hard."

The stranger laid his gentle hand upon the old man's arm. Elkanah quivered, his lip trembled, and his eyes grew dim.

"Is there no resource?" said the carpenter.

"None," replied the old man, with sardonic bitterness. "Unless it 's to sell old miser Dyzer's picture. Infernal old doddi-poljolt head! Old crack-brained, crazy-noddy peak! I used to laugh over it, but for the last week it 's been like wormwood and gall to me."

"What do you mean?" said the carpenter.

"I 'll tell you. Another story," returned Elkanah half savagely. "I mentioned that old Peter Dyzer left me this place. I was a young fellow, rather given to pleasure, and it was uncle's notion that farming would make a man of me. Well, it did; I own that. I came down here from Pennsylvania — my State,

sir, my State; I worked hard, and got well off by my own exertions. At forty I married. Well, except a scant five hundred dollars, the place was all old Peter left me. Now, farming 's like any other business: the more capital you put in, the more profit you will get out. And, save the five hundred, I 'd no capital. I had to put in work. I did it."

"What did your uncle do with his money?" asked the carpenter.

"He had n't any," replied Elkanah in a glowering, muffled roar. "Old miser Dyzer, as they called him, was n't as rich as people rumored him. He left all to me, — this place and all that it contains, the will said. Well, the place itself was all, — all. If, with his shrewdness and close bargaining, he 'd made any money, I suppose he gave it to loafer Tomeny for pictures, and the miserable old billiveezee drank it up in apple-brandy."

"And what about the picture?" asked the carpenter.

"Oh, jillery poo!" blurted Elkanah, with utter contempt. "My good sir, pray read what he wrote and left me in this bank-book. I was reading it this afternoon. Read it aloud, sir, if you 'll be so kind."

The stranger slowly took the little bank-book, bound in dingy red, which the old man had pro-

duced from his skirt-pocket, and read aloud what was written there in a stiff, bold hand : —

Mr. Elkanah Dyzer.

Respected Nephew :

I Leave you All. Keep the Straight Line. Work, and get Wealth. A Man not worth Money is the most Miserable Divell in the World, excepting Always a Man who is worth Nothing Else.

Maintain Open Fires. None of Count Rumford's New-Fangled Stoves for Me. Putt Fires on Every Hearth on Christmas Eve and Day, if your Means affoord, call in your Neighbors and Friends, and Draw Wide your Curtains that your Light may be Seen of All Men. Dress the Apartments with Plenteous Holly. You Cannot have Any too Much.

Stand Fast by the Great Republic. Live and Die in the Principles of Thomas Jefferson, the Greatest Birth of Time in this Country, and his Thoughts and Influence of Rich Importance to us All Forever, it Mattering Nothing what the Federalists, the Tories, and the Divells of Hell do Say.

No Slaves. All Men are Equal. Pay Wages for your Labour. Vote and Act with Any Party that Aims to Liberate our Bondmen, and Make Democracy the Absolute Law of our

Country. We must Cut Loose from All the Thinking and Practises of the Old World in Every Respect.

Cherish Womankind. They Should have Representation and Equal Voice in the Government of a Free Country. What Degrades Women injures Men. Mothers are the True Men of Any Land. Women are Men's Equals, and great Mothers are their Superiors.

I Leave you the Valuable Paintings of the Great Tomeny, whose Early Loss at the Advanced Age of Sixty Years, I must Deplore. You will Treasure them and Not Dispose of Any, excepting in the Event herein Set Forth.

When Ten Years have Past by, I Enjoin you, or your Heir or Heirs, to Cover and Expunge with severall Coats of Paint, the Portrait of Me in my Character of Judas grasping the Bag. This I Suffer to Remain so Long that you May be Daily Counselled against the Sin of Greed which is in the Dyzer Blood, and May work Ill. The Companion Painting of the Good Man Christ in His True Aspect, I do Solemnly Enjoin you to Leave Where it Now is Placed; excepting Only should the Estate by Embarrassment or Loss be about to Pass from your Ownership, or that of your Lawful Heirs, in which Event you or They, as Provided in My Will, Must Sell the Painting at its Value. It is Es-

teemed by an Excellent Virtuoso in such Matters, to be Worth Fifty Thousand Dollars in Goold. Your uncle,

PETER DYZER.

The reading concluded with a sort of angry groan, ending in a snort, from Elkanah.

"Where is this picture?" said the carpenter.

Elkanah rose with a beckoning gesture, and they both passed into the adjoining room, lit by lamps and firelight, and all bosky with evergreen. The jamb or face of the fireplace was paneled with solid oak. The right-hand side, where the picture of Judas had been, was painted over in oak grain. On the other side was a full-length figure, about two feet high, in a dark gaberdine, with a rosy face, gray hair, and short white beard, the whole enmargined by a clumsy imitation of a wreath of holly leaves and scarlet berries. As a work of art, it was utterly worthless, though not without a certain pleasing effect, chiefly owing to the blurring of the outlines, and the obscurity of the once staring colors, which the wood had absorbed. Aided by the dimness into which its hues and lines had fallen it did have, as the old man had said, a curious general resemblance to the gray carpenter, who stood, with a lamp in his hand, examining it with a fixity of attention which it certainly did not deserve.

"That's it," said Elkanah, with a disdainful sniff, as the other concluded his scrutiny. "That's the precious gem! Worth about two York shillings, I say. What say you?"

"I am of your uncle Peter's judgment," replied the carpenter composedly. "Fifty thousand dollars, I say."

Elkanah glared at him, his face ablaze, his voice choking with sudden rage. The carpenter opposed resistance to the glare with a look firm, impassive, indomitable as a fortress wall. The old man's anger rebounded from it, baffled, as a lion might rebound, leaping against stone; and, with a gasp, he bounced to the other end of the room.

"All right, sir," he said, wheeling about, and coming back with polite smiles and bows, in which smothered fury, sarcastic amusement, and deference were all expressed and blended. "I respect you very much, sir. I do, indeed. And every one is entitled to his opinion. Pardon me, but, if you please, we 'll not discuss this matter further. I 'd really rather not, if you 'll indulge me."

He saw that the carpenter was looking past him, with heavy-lidded, draining gaze, into the other room, and he turned. Faulkner and Emily were there, vivid in the fire sheen, murmuring to each other, in enchanted attitudes.

Behind, in shadow, at a window, with reverted head and chewing lip, pale, silent, vengeful, was John. The carpenter, with moveless eyes, was absorbing it all.

"Oh," said Elkanah, with a slight movement; "my boy John, — the one at the window. The other 's his friend. And that 's John's wife, Emily. Come in, sir; I 'll introduce you."

"What is the friend's name?" asked the carpenter quietly, without moving.

"Faulkner, sir, — Michael Faulkner. Son of the General," replied Elkanah.

"A sweet boy," said the carpenter, in a tone of deep affection. "A born lover."

Elkanah, already moving to the door, flirted about, slapping his hands together.

"By the big Pedee! A hit!" he exclaimed. "You 've said the word." And he looked at the carpenter meaningly, and with wonder and admiration.

Mrs. Dyzer, Tom, and Fanny Redwood at that moment entered the fire-lit apartment, and the next, the whole family, gathered in its lights and shadows, were gazing, with mute faces all turned one way in curious wonder and interest, at what seemed the grand original of Peter Dyzer's rude picture, coming in with Elkanah from the paneled room, with his strange aspect of blended youth and age, his child sweetness, his

prophet majesty, his look of rosy innocence and gray wisdom.

"What do you think of that for a likeness?" chirruped Elkanah, proudly beaming. "At my particular request, he 's come off the oak fireplace to spend the evening. My friend, Mr. Carpenter."

They all bowed smilingly, but still in some wonder, and before the old man could proceed to the more special introductions, the carpenter, somewhat to his amazement, yet in a way quite in keeping with his unconventional aspect and manner, was moving with a sort of measured alertness among the group, paying his simple and affectionate addresses to each person, with the air of being already on familiar terms with them, and of knowing all about them; thus establishing himself in close *rapport* with every one, as only a man of powerful intuitions, vivid impressions, and great magnetic force and dignity could have done, and leaving them with a sense as if something electric and very sweet had swept through them. To each he gave his hand with some apt word; but coming to Faulkner, he put his arm around him, and, drawing him to his breast, lightly kissed him on the forehead, saying gently, "My son."

The tender voice, the unusual daring action, which sent sweet lightning through Faulkner's

veins, left the others with a soft, mysterious thrill. They stood like enchanted figures, statue-still, in the dancing lights and shadows of the leafy room. In the hallowed quiet, the wind harp was sounding.

"Well!" cried Elkanah, breaking the momentary muteness, and bursting into laughter, "this *is* jolly! Mr. Carpenter, you 're a new face, but we count you an old friend. I sha'n't wonder if you turn out to be uncle Peter's Good Man himself, after all. Make yourself at home, sir. We all like you well. The company 's coming, and, hey! but we 'll have a staving jamboree! There 'll be a swingeing supper by and by, and refreshments soon. You 'll say, sir, that Mrs. Dyzer's apple-toddy is the best you ever drank in your life. And if Miss Faulkner there, who gets such sweet love-tokens, does n't entirely change characters with Mr. Redwood here, who does n't get any — (never mind, Fanny my robin, there 'll be plenty for you when you get to the hallelujah meadows, if not sooner) — he 'll make you a punch, sir, that you 'll say is the best you ever drank, too. He 's a rouser to make punch, I tell you, though he only sips it like a lady himself. And I 've Bourbon in my cellar, sir, twenty-five years old; and Sherry, and a Madeira, sir, that 's enough to make the island blush for shame redder than the cochi-

neal they say it 's gone to growing. Oh, but we 'll have a most flambustuous time! Excuse us, sir, if we seem to neglect you a little for a half hour or so. You came early, and we 've a few preparations to make still. But make yourself at home, sir. Take the liberty of the house. Walk through, sir, — walk through. The rooms are all open. And dumfoodledoodebusticate me," he concluded with a sturdy roar of glee, "if we don't have one thundering staver of a Christmas Eve, if it 's the last!"

And so ending, amidst general merriment, the grand old Pennsylvania giant strode away with flamboyant gayety, and a step that shook the floor.

III.

The company dispersed, some wandering, some busied with minor arrangements for the evening. Little Lilian sat silent in pensive, deep delight, satisfied beyond words with the presence of him she had long looked for, and sometimes listening to the holy murmur of the wind harp. The carpenter, taking, as he had been bidden, the liberty of the house, was roaming from room to room, absorbing all, often returning to the fire-lit chamber, and always passing beyond to pause before the picture.

In these journeyings, he now and then met solitary members of the group with which he had so ingratiated himself, and each time, as if to strengthen his hold upon them, he paused for a word.

It was in this way that he came upon Faulkner. The young man was standing in the fire-lit room, with clasped hands drooped, in his wonted attitude of singular grace, tranced in musing.

"I was thinking of you," he said dreamfully, lifting his dark, tender eyes to the carpenter's face as the latter approached him.

The carpenter put his arm around him, and drew him to his breast. Faulkner, a little faint with emotion, let his head droop upon the stalwart bosom.

"When I saw you, I loved you," said the gray stranger.

"And I," returned the young man, looking up with frank affection. "You made me feel the reality of something I thought an abstraction."

"The love passing the love of women," said the carpenter.

"The same," answered the youth. "The love of Shakespeare for the unknown, David for Jonathan, John for the Redeemer. The manly love."

The carpenter held him for a moment gathered to his heart, then silently released him, and paced away.

He had a noiseless movement, not at all stealthy, but that of a man of gentle soul and breeding, and so he often came upon the others when they did not know he was near. It was thus he found the charming Fanny, in the same apartment, innocently dreaming upon the fire, and like a rose in bloom. She started, but into her habitual caressing curtsey, as she saw him close by.

"Joy and salutation, sweet child and darling," he said with fondest smiling. "Thou art like some torch, perfumed and scarlet."

The lovely Fanny glowed to burning crimson at this dazzling orientalism, and conscious, too, of the fatherly affection of his first address, forgot to curtsey, and instinctively drew nigh him for a moment; then with that expression only, and with innocent, grateful eyes, drew backward, and, bending and blushing, sidled away.

The carpenter continued his perambulations. A little while after, he came upon John, standing in the centre of the lighted apartment across the passage-way, gazing, with arms tightly folded and face of gloomful misery, through the doorways to the second room beyond, where Emily and Faulkner were walking together.

"We meet again," said the carpenter cheerily, extending his hand, which the young man instantly grasped in his own. The carpenter held it long, with well-returned pressure. "This from me, dear comrade," he said with martial affection. "From me, lover of soldiers."

John's face kindled, in its pallor, with pride, with pleasure, with secret, sturdy liking, at the magnetic grasp, the fountain-opening words; and, forgetting for the moment his trouble, he looked wistfully after the gray friend, as the latter went on to the second room beyond.

Faulkner paced slowly off at his approach, leaving Emily standing musingly alone. She looked up, mildly smiling, as the carpenter drew near.

"Well met again, daughter," he said fondly, pausing before her. "Dear ever to me, the true wife of my soldier." And bending his grand and gentle head, he went by.

One would have thought that he had struck some chord. Emily, dimly startled, thrilled and pleased, stood faintly flushing, her eyes cast down, her hand on her bosom, breathlessly considering, with the air of one coming from a dream. Presently she looked up. The carpenter had disappeared.

Meanwhile, Tom, who had been scouting around after the beauteous Fanny, without be-

ing able to come up with her, at last found her in the fire-lit room, with none but little pensive Lilian present. Here was his chance, he thought, and, with a loud "hem," in he walked, bold as a lion on the threshold, but meek as any lamb when he got near her. Desperate, however, he made an effort, stammered inarticulately, and finally said — yes, actually said — that it was a fine evening! Fanny at once replied, very innocently, that it was; and in a moment, Tom having exhausted the fresh and engaging topic of the weather, and having half turned away in whirling embarrassment as to the next thing to say, she, curtseying from him in the most unconscious manner, vanished into old Peter Dyzer's room.

"It 's no use," said poor Tom, talking aloud to himself after his father's style, in his new abandonment. "She 's too good for me, anyway. I 'm going to the war, — that 's a comfort. And I 've got the lock of her hair that Emily snipped off for me, — that 's another. She does n't care a hooter for me — not one hooter."

"Think so?" said a blunt voice.

Tom reddened like fire. The carpenter was near him, with pursed mouth, smiling.

"Yes, I do," blurted poor Tom stoutly, seeing no other way out of the matter now, save open confession to this old friendly father. "She

always gets away from me when I come up to her."

"Because she loves you," bluffly said the carpenter.

Tom stared, with rolling eyes, at this astounding announcement.

"See here, my boy," said the old stranger, "are you courageous?"

"Secesh 'll find out before long," replied Tom indignantly. "I 'd face a battery."

"Very well. Let 's see if you can face a girl," said the carpenter. "You just go in there, my boy, walk up to her prompt, and say, 'Fanny, I love you.' See what that will do. Go, now."

Tom started off with sudden valor, into the next room. What took place there during the next two minutes shall not be revealed; but at the end of that time, out came Tom, swelling with pride and grinning with victory, arm in arm with the lovely Fanny, whose heart-shaped face, suffused with heightened bloom, had the most curious air of unconscious innocence imaginable. The old carpenter gazed at them, with head bent sideways, pursed mouth and peering eyes, and a smile almost jovial if it had not been so gentle, as they passed slowly by.

A few minutes afterwards, old Elkanah, having concluded his share in the little arrangements, was sauntering through the passage, when

he suddenly heard his wife laughing, and, as he thought, hysterically. The old man started as if he had been shot, grew cold and pale, and listened. In a moment, again came the laughter, this time more assuring, and evidently proceeding from the room with the picture.

"Great God!" he murmured. "Ruth Dyzer laughing! My old wife laughing! That's a sound we have n't had in this house for many a day. What 's happened?"

He stole cautiously into the fire-lit room, where little Lilian sat alone, and gazed with blinking eyes into the apartment beyond. To his utter amazement, there stood his wife, close to the serenely smiling stranger, with her apron held to her face, laughing with all her might, quivering all over with uncontrollable joy. He saw the carpenter's lips move, as if uttering some brief word, and instantly her mirth was restrained.

Elkanah slapped his hands on his thighs, and burst into noisy glee. The carpenter paced slowly off, and Mrs. Dyzer came dancing out to her husband, perfectly radiant, with skirts and ribbons fluttering and waving in the leaping bloom of the fire, flung her arms around his neck, gave him one smacking kiss, and, before he could snatch her to kiss back, she was off, and actually running away.

The old man started after her with a bound,

stopped, swayed, and broke into laughter, with his eyes blind with tears.

"Ruth, Ruth, old darling, old rose forever sweet, my robin red, my joy, come back — come back to me!" he cried, with groping arms and spluttering mirth and tears, and eyes that vainly strove for undimmed vision. "Come back — come back to me, old sweetheart dear! She 's gone. O Lord, she kissed me! The old wife's not going, after all. The red-hot devil, harpoon-tailed and horned, take the estate and welcome — I 've got my old wife still! And she 's laughing! Ruth Dyzer 's laughing! My Goddlemity! what a young fool I am!" he burst out with a fresh peal, wiping his eyes with his sleeve. "Now what made her laugh? Oh, by George! Master Carpenter, you 've got jokes inch-deep with cream in you, to make Ruth Dyzer laugh! My conscience! what was he saying to her to make her laugh! And she ran out and kissed me. O Lord! O Lord!" And whistling softly, he began to dance with an air of deliberation ludicrous to see.

"Pretty doings for old folks, *I* say," said the small elfin voice from the hearth.

Old Elkanah stopped with a leg in the air, stared at the demure midget, serenely rocking herself with dolly, and, with a peal of mirth, strode from the room.

A little while, and the leafy cavern, redly glowing then in shadowy gloom, beheld a darker drama. John, white as death, was there, with chewing mouth and dusk-lit eyes. Beyond, in the fuller and paler light of the adjoining room, standing together, their backs turned towards him, were Faulkner and Emily. He watched them through the doorway. The dream, the invincible sweet madness, hardly disturbed as yet, had returned upon them, and, though their lips had never breathed a word, nor their hearts awakened to a sense of the reality, their forms in every sentiment, in every trait and curve, betrayed their love. He saw it all. It was unmistakable now. He had meant to wait only to be fully assured that it was so, — then, never to speak one word, but return to the army, and spend his silent disdain in death upon the enemy's lines. But the experience of war, which had been his already, gives strange directions to men's after-thoughts and lives. There stood the false, false friend — the false, false wife, that he had loved. Here, by the fireside near him, was his child ; afar, deep in its winter grave, was the baby darling that he mourned. And there, their mother in her treason, and near her, with poisoning charm and hell-born beauty, he who had allured her. By all the depth of his former love for him, rose high to the utmost welkin of

his life his torrent surge of hatred. To burst in upon him — to cleave through to the very neck in blood that fair young head of curls! — Something shot through him — he became tense and hard through all his frame, as if transformed to animate iron — a dreadful ether spread dilating through his veins — mad, deaf, and blind, he whirled without a sound, slung up the hatchet from the hearth, and rushed with a thick, red darkness bellowing in his brain —

The hatchet was torn from his hand, and he was held in clamps of adamant. In that tremendous clutch, the very desire to struggle sank from him, and he became strengthless and icy cold. Glimmering through the fading darkness of his mind, he saw the carpenter.

"You are hasty, young man," the latter said, with stern composure.

John glared at him with glassy eyes. The cold sweat stood upon his face. He felt, with agonizing shame, like some helpless brute, caught in the toils, and confronted by a man.

"You do not understand this matter at all," said the carpenter, speaking slowly. "I do. There is nothing that will not come right. Leave it to me."

He released him. The very action implied a grandeur of serenity and confidence which was all-mighty. John trembled.

"My comrade, I love you," said the carpenter, still speaking slowly. "Lean the weight of your heart upon me. Trust me well. Go, now, and walk in the cold air. Come not back here till you can come a man."

John stood motionless, with bowed head.

"I trust you," he hoarsely faltered at length. And, without another word, he got his hat, and went out of doors.

The carpenter remained still till he heard the shutting of the door; then silently laid down the hatchet, and took the large oaken chair, beside the little girl. She rose, and came to stand between his knees. His left hand caressed her curly head; his right lay upon his knee; his eyes mused vacantly.

"I fell down once, and broke my ankle; and sometimes it makes me lame. I'm lame now," said the little prattler, with great cheerfulness.

"I know it," replied the carpenter.

"But nobody told you," she returned earnestly. "How could you know it? By your magic art?"

"Yes," said the carpenter, seemingly unamused by the big old phrase of the tiny mouth.

In a minute, Emily came in alone. She looked strangely restless. A hectic spot burned in her cheek. Her blue eyes were brilliant with uneasy fire. For a few moments, she

silently flitted about the room, occasionally glancing at the carpenter, who never looked at her. At length she came to him, and, kneeling down, began a pretense of adjusting the child's dress. A keen eye might have divined that her only desire was to be near him.

"It is not your only child?" he said quietly, without moving.

She was still for a moment.

"No," she answered gently. "We had another. He is dead."

The presence of the stranger seemed to rest her. She remained kneeling, very still, with bent head, in his soothing neighborhood. Her soul appeared to know its first term of utter peace for many days.

"You think of him?" said the carpenter, in a deep, hushed voice.

For a little while she was silent. Then, gradually, she lifted her face to his, pale and wan, and exalted with unutterable tender sorrow.

"Yes. I think of him," she murmured fervidly and slowly. "Sometimes it seems as if all the under-currents of my life ran only to him."

He gazed in silence upon her rapt countenance, with a look of sweet solemnity, and his deep voice issued in measured cadences upon the sacred pause, like balm, like dew, like clear, celestial music.

"Think of him always," he said, "and with

the thought of him, my daughter, be your life kept noble. Nor deem him separated from you forever, who, in the peace of heaven, yearns to his mother's arms. Behold, the high soul returns to its darlings — the deep heart shall find its own! Beautiful in their pure brightness are the early dead. Beautiful is death, — Consoler, Sanctifier, Redeemer, — beautiful as life is beautiful, when to the best self true. Nor in death, nor in life, shall there be any loss, nor doubt, nor change, to the well-believing and deep-beloving heart. The true wife shall not fail from her husband. The true mother cannot lose her child."

She bent her head, brooding on the indeterminate and mystic words, and in a moment, he felt a warm tear drop upon the hand which rested on his knee. Then, with a sudden, passionate movement, she pressed her lips to his hand, and rose, and flitted from the room.

The carpenter stooped quickly, lifted the little girl, and gathered her to his bosom. She snuggled close to him, her little arms around his neck, her face concealed, her yellow curls mingling with his beard. His gray head bent above her in the happy firelight, and his lips murmured, "Saved."

They sat quietly for a while. At last John came in, perfectly calm, and even cheerful, and

stood by the mantel, gazing at the fire. Presently entered Tom and Fanny. Then Mrs. Dyzer, strangely joyous, with a beaming glance at the carpenter, as she sat down before the hearth. Then Faulkner. Lastly, and together, Emily and old Elkanah. Emily, as nobody but the all-noticing carpenter observed, had been weeping. But she looked very happy, and, with a sort of virginal timidity, took a seat near her husband.

"Well!" said the old man, looking around him, with lion-smiling, "here we are, all together again, like Nebuchadnezzar Brown's cows, when he had but one. And now," he added, plumping down into a chair, "by the grand gorrifications, Mrs. Ruth Dyzer, I 'm going to have an explanation! You 'll please to tell me, lady madam, what was that joke of Mr. Good Man's there, with four inches of fat on its ribs, that made you laugh? Out with it, now!"

Mrs. Dyzer clapped her apron to her face, and laughed till she shook.

"He told me my fortune," she gasped presently.

"The devil he did!" said Elkanah.

The carpenter was looking with a roused, intuitive face at the countenance of Faulkner, on which there was a strange expression. The knowledge of his passion for Emily was there,

new-come to him, with no intention of retreating. The carpenter read him like an open page.

"Certainly," he said, with his stern eyes still on the young man, hastily putting down the little girl. "I can tell fortunes. Did n't you know that?"

He rose with an alacrity he had not yet shown, and took the hatchet from the hearth.

"You come in here, one by one," he said, moving towards Peter Dyzer's room, "and I 'll tell you your fortunes." The next instant he was inside, and had shut the door behind him.

They stared at each other, and then burst into general uproarious laughter.

"What the deuce did he take the hatchet for?" sputtered old Elkanah, shaking all over.

"Perhaps he 's going to tell the fortunes by axionomancy, like Her Trippa to Panurge," said the jesting Faulkner. "It needs a hatchet for that."

"Well, who 's going first?" cried the old man with gayety.

"I 'm going, my own self," said little Lilian. And suddenly in she went, limping, and shut the door behind her, while they all stared.

The carpenter stood in the centre of the lonely room. He bent, and took her up on his breast.

"All good, all joy for you, sweet baby," he

said. "To be well of your lame knee; to live long and happy; to remember me always; to grow up beautiful and good and strong; to die very old, and become a splendid angel. That is your fortune, sweet babe and darling."

He set her down. The little one, without one word, tottled out, closing the door, and, amidst a general peal of merriment, resumed her chair, with a face of solemn satisfaction.

"What did he say, yellow-bird?" cried Elkanah.

"I won't tell nobody," she serenely answered.

They all roared together.

"Well, what did he do with the hatchet?" asked another.

"He had it up on the mantelpiece," she replied positively.

They all roared again, being now in that condition in which people laugh at anything.

"But see how solemn she looks," put in Faulkner, as the mirth subsided. "'Pon my word, it's like the cave of Trophonius, where they went in gay and came out sad!"

"Well, who next? By Crackie! this is fun!" shouted the old man. "Who next for the cave of Trophonius?"

There was a general tumult. Everybody wanted Elkanah to go, but, red with glee, he resisted.

"I 'll go," said Faulkner, starting away, smiling. "See how gay I am," he playfully added, turning when near the door. "But I 'll come out sad."

The door closed upon his face of playful warning, and, left together, they waited, listening to the inarticulate murmur of voices from within.

The carpenter still stood in the centre of the room.

"Welcome, sweet boy," he said, as Faulkner advanced gayly. "Welcome, thou in whom mixes the perfumed nature of woman with so much of manliness! I greet you, born lover of women!"

"Lover of you," said Faulkner, blushing coyly, with down-dropped lashes, and drooping into a posture of leopard grace.

"Lover of Emily Dyzer. Beguiler of a wife. Betrayer of a friend," was the stern, low answer.

Three sentences — three blows — three claps of awakening thunder. Faulkner turned deathly white, staggered, stood still, and put his hand to his forehead, which slowly reddened into a dark brand. In the other room the laughter was ringing loud.

"What fortune for him who dreams when he should wake?" said the stern and heavy voice,

after a dread pause. "What fortune for the youth, slave to amativeness, misnamed Love, who should be its hardy and virile master?"

The young man gazed at him with dark, burning, woeful eyes, like one struck with sudden despair and agony into stone.

"Go on," continued the relentless voice. "Go on in your course. But to each act, its returns. To every good, public, or secret, though crowned with crucifixion, its award of blessing returning to the soul. To every evil, however prosperous, however hidden, its inexorable, avenging sequel. Such is the law of things. On to your burning dream on the bosom of the paramour, and slowly waken in the scorch of hell!"

At this dreadful speech, delivered in a voice like low, clear thunder, and from a front of prophet majesty and fire, Faulkner reeled on his feet, and stretched out his arms with a subdued, imploring cry.

"Shall I tell you the order?" pursued the merciless voice. "The romance will melt, — the amour will be done. What, then, for you? Return? The innocent years are far behind you, half-despised. Your passions are unchained. Forward! Harden on into worldliness. Enter, a fresh and loving youth; emerge, a diseased and jaded libertine. On, till perhaps the libertine merges in the old devotee. But still the

unquenchable embers light the sick white ashes. Still, in the correctness and decorum of the outward life, the soul depraves, and the man becomes the demon. Wake in the dread midnight, old, clogged, and wrung with maladies, and feel the sharper bite of unavailing remorse, and the memories of youth come back with wormwood. And Death, and the Infinite, with its unpaid returns to follow! Oh, happier far for you the swifter fate — your skull cloven through by him you have so wronged — a man's life ruined in your blood, the wife crazed, the child an orphan, the family desolate — and you a murdered corpse upon the hearth by you despoiled and extinguished."

Deadened by the closed door, the mirth pealed ghastlily.

"Spare me!" gasped Faulkner. "I did not think. I did not know. There has been nothing wrong between us. You have recalled me to myself. I thank you. I never meant harm."

"Her husband has watched you, and thinks the worst," said the carpenter.

"I will go at once from the house, and never come here more," said the young man hurriedly.

"And leave him to hate and loathe you," was the severe rejoinder.

"He will kill me," moaned Faulkner in agony. "Not that I fear to die," he added, his head

upflung in pale and gallant pride. "But oh!" he faltered, "by his hand, against whom I could not struggle! My God! my God! Oh, wretch that I am!"

"Leave not this house," said the remorseless voice. "Go straight to him, and own your fault. Yours the sin, — take you the expiation like a man."

There was a moment of intense stillness.

"I will," said Faulkner with sublime submission.

His head was bowed; his hands were clasped upon his bosom; he stood in repentant silence. A long and mournful pause ensued.

"Oh, my son!" said the near voice, grand and tender; "my boy, my best-beloved, child of my soul, my own!" and, weeping, he felt himself enfolded by the stalwart arms, and clung in weakness to the all-loving breast. "All bright and holy fortunes to you, my beloved, my darling. But not for you, with gifts, with eloquence and learning, this life of enervation, — these days of dalliance and idle ease. Awake! arouse! Go, the apostle of all love and every loving cause. Plant thou, in thy strength and sweetness of nature and fortune, thicker than grass, brighter than flowers, the seeds of truth and liberty and comradeship in America. To thee — to such as thou — the human race, the

immense care of the future. To thee, child of the morning, the fiery sowing of the morning that shall never fade. On to immortal labor, — to the divine sorrow and the joy! Still be thou lover of women. But love thou to uplift them. Teach them the lore of heaven. Sow their lives deep with exalting thoughts, with gracious memories. Behold! all who sit in darkness and know not light; all who wander in enmities and know not love; the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed, the vile, are thy apostolate! Serve, struggle, endure! Go; to brows like thine belong every crown — see that thou fail not of the crown of thorns! My son," — and, bending, he kissed him on the mouth, — "with this kiss I dedicate you to a manly life."

He released him, and drew backward. For a moment Faulkner stood, thrilling with ecstasy, blind with emotion; then, wiping his eyes, he tottered to the door.

Pallid, desperate, his face wet with tears, he dashed in upon them. His appearance was the signal for one uproar of mirth. They hardly glanced, — they never looked at him. Remembering his words as he went in, they actually thought he was acting, and with shut eyes, bobbing heads, and faces between their knees, they pealed and shook till they were giddy. John only, who had begun to laugh with the rest from

mere contagion, was instantly sobered amidst the confusion, by Faulkner flying up, and seizing him by the arms.

"I am less guilty than you think me," he sighed amidst the cloistering tumult, "yet too guilty to live. Kill me."

The young man instantly divined something of what had happened, and, with a sudden burst of manly and generous feeling, he threw his arm around Faulkner's shoulder, and pulled him away to the centre of the room.

"Hush!" he said, "I forgive you. No more now. We will talk soon. Away, away for a while, lest they suspect something. I 'll see you presently."

Faulkner glided from view, and John went back to the circle, loudly laughing.

"I swear!" cried Elkanah, ha-ha-ing till the tears ran down his cheeks, "if this does n't beat all! Did ye see Mike's face?" he screamed, with a fresh peal. "Such a mimic I never did know. He beats old Harry Placide. Lord! Lord! but the cave of Trophonius is the best game I ever played in my life!"

"You go in, father," cried John, and at once there was a beseeching merry chorus of "Yes, yes, you go, — you go!"

"No, I won't," gasped Elkanah, jumping up, shaking with merriment.

"Yes, yes!" and they all surrounded him, with deafening clatter, pushing him, pulling him, he holding back, quivering from head to foot, till they got him through the doorway into the room, and held him, trying to escape, and too faint with mirth to succeed.

"Here 's our prisoner," cried first one and then another. "Now tell his fortune in spite of him. We 'll leave him, and guard the door."

The carpenter stood gravely by the side of the picture, with his left arm resting easily on the mantelpiece, while his right held the hatchet.

"No," said he; "you can all stay. Your fortune, sir, is here." He touched the picture with the handle of the implement. "You are a ruined man. You must retrieve your losses with this valuable painting."

"Ruined! ruined!" they all murmured, releasing the old man, and looking at each other with frightened faces. Elkanah, his mirth suddenly quenched, glowered darkly-red with rising anger, and his blue eyes flamed.

"Yes, ruined," said the carpenter austerely. "He forgot his grand old uncle's injunction to keep the straight line. He yielded to the sin of greed, which is in the Dyzer blood. He was well enough off, and could not let well enough alone. He speculated, is ruined, and his homestead and family are sacrificed."

"Sir," shouted Elkanah, looming with wrath, "this has passed all limits! How dare you divulge my secret! How dare you insult me with your infamous irony about that daub!"

"Peace!" said the carpenter imperiously. "Accept the lesson. The picture retrieves all. Receive the pardon and the bounty of the wise and loving Dead!"

Quickly he wedged in the helve of the hatchet between the panel and the jamb, and pried with an immense strength. The oaken front bent forward under the strain, tore from its fastenings with griding screech, fell heavily with a volleying cloud of dust, and out of the black, oven-like cavity tumbled, with solid chink, a portly bag of gold, and another, and another, and another. The space within was full of them. Fifty thousand dollars were in that hole.

There was a moment of dead stupefaction. Then, with a hoarse cry, the old man bounded forward, and fell upon his knees, clutching the gold. The carpenter paced slowly to the back part of the room. Some of them, half-weeping with terror and gratitude, would have seized him as he passed, but there was something in his demeanor so cold and stern that their hands fell away.

"Gold! gold!" shouted Elkanah, with frightful volubility, springing to his feet, red, greedy,

horrible, with a bag in his hands. "Saved! saved! saved! Oh, the heavy, good gold! Gold at two-twenty in the market. A hundred and ten thousand dollars' worth here — oh, more, maybe — more, more — why not more! Ah, hah! but I am saved! And proud — proud — proud! No war for me now. To the eternal pit with the heart-shattering country, that robs me of my money, my peace, my boys! Ah, but I 'll have them back — they sha'n't go. John sha'n't go, nor Tom — I 'll disown 'em, and I 'll curse them, if they try it on. No, they sha'n't go. And I 'll have George back, if he 's living — I 'll track the States for him — I 'll ransom him from the rebs, if they 've got him. And Rupe — I 'll kill him if I find him — ah, hah, hah, hah!" — he pealed with maniacal laughter. "And here we 'll live, all happy and free. Happy and free, with gold are we. Substitutes, if they draft us — oh, ho! oh, ho! And my old wife, — where are ye, birdie? I can't see ye in my new gold spectacles, — she 'll have a new silk gown, heavy and rich, — oh, two of 'em, if they don't cost too much. And oh, my neighbors, but I 'll be revenged — I 'll tramp on 'em! Oh, you half Union, half-secesh curs! — but I don't care which ye are, now. Only I 'll pay ye back for your looks and whispers! Oh, the faces I 've seen for a week back. They 've got it

rumored among 'em that the old man was going down; and oh, the coldness, the hanging back, the sneers, the smiles, the looks, the whispers! But the old man 's up again, and I 'll pay 'em back, — for the old man 's up again, with gold, gold, sweet, sweet gold! Oh! what is better? — nothing — nothing — nothing — nothing.— nothing!"

He ceased, choking with his hungry fury, and in dead stillness, while every white and frighted face stared mutely at the other, he fell to kissing the bag. In the silence, a mighty blast of wind arose and sighed around the house with solemn suspiration, and from the other room the wind harp rang hollowly and loud, and failed in delicate and eerie spirit music. Following upon the after silence came the voice of the carpenter, clear, scornful, and still.

"Love is better than gold," he said slowly.

The old man slightly started, turned very white, and shivered as the warning voice smote heavily in upon him. It was but a spasm, and could not be maintained with such as he. Already ashamed a little of his vulgar rapture, yet furtively hugging it in secrecy; his greedy feeling meanly creeping, yet lingering, in the refluent tumult of the noble elements which were so strong in him; with a dim sense of how poor a figure he made with his new wealth and new-born

avarice, in contrast with the august poverty and towering lovingness of the man behind him; conscious, too, how much of love and gratitude he owed him, yet afraid to turn and face him now, — he stood, silently, almost cowering, his face, like his soul, puckering, a red heat tingling and prickling over him, humiliated and ill at ease, with the heavy weight of money in his hands. There was an utter suspension of all sound and motion.

Suddenly the hush was broken by a hubbub of mingled laughter, stamping, children's voices, and a rattling tattoo at the front door.

"Quick!" shouted Elkanah, starting, and tossing the bags into the cavity, as these evidences of the returning human world struck upon his ear. "Quick! the guests are arriving. Silence, all! Not a word of this. Hurry! Up with the panel again. Quick — the hatchet! A broom to sweep this floor! Fanny, my robin red-breast, not a word. Silence all. So!"

A minute's activity and confusion, and the room had resumed its usual appearance. The gray Christ on the panel again shut in the bale and blessing of the gold. Composed and silent before it, as one to whom good and evil were the same, stood the carpenter. The family, relieved, though frightened still, had hurried to receive their guests. All was in a bustle of

welcoming, in the rooms beyond. But in the fire-lit chamber, while the carpenter stood solitary in the room adjoining, was Elkanah, also alone; and all to himself, his voice was booming.

"Better, better, — yes, love is better," he said, again and again. "But, oh!" he added at last, "oh, that I could feel it as well as say it! Oh, unless something happens to change me, that I could be as I was a little while ago, happy, happy, happy in my trouble, loving my old wife, my boys, my home, my country — and what every damned fool in these United States calls ruined!"

IV.

For the next hour there were continual arrivals, and the house resounded with trampling feet, and talk, and mirth, and revelry, and the voices and noise of children. The first-comers were a large bevy of these little ones, girls and boys, convoyed by black servants, and gathered from half a dozen houses by Elkanah's wagons, sent around for that purpose. Immediately upon their appearance, Daniel Snow, with assistants, came upon the scene, supplanting all the lamps with wax candles, red, white, and blue, and lighting with these patriot tapers every

apartment, including that hitherto lit by firelight only.

The children quite usurped one room to themselves with their games, and were there, here, and everywhere besides. They made the house ring, while their fathers and mothers, sturdy farmers and country people, with their sons, daughters, and wives, made it rustle and roar. Amidst all, cheerful and composed, walked the carpenter, saying little to any one, and oftenest lingering near the children.

The various members of the family took their part in the common enjoyment somewhat feverishly, unable to be rid of the thought of the strange stroke of fortune which had fallen upon the household. Perhaps the calmest of all was John, who, amidst the general merry-making, sat apart for a long time with his arm around Faulkner, all told, and nothing but affection between them, while the carpenter watched them with a loving eye.

Emily, singularly restless, bright with lovely color, gay with the gayest, but never staying long in one place, flitted from room to room. She never came near Faulkner, nor did he seek her. Occasionally she wandered near her husband, with coy, virginal glances, but always, though half-surprised at his look of silent kindness, she timidly hurried away.

Amidst all, with grandiose virility, with mountainous gayety, with stormy jocundity, moved Elkanah. He felt somewhat dashed within, noticing that his wife, though comely and laughing still with the new life that had so inexplicably come upon her, was again cold to him; and he knew that his behavior over the discovery of the treasure had much to do with her deportment. Touched by this sense, but still unquelled, and a little hardened by the thought of it, — sometimes, too, perplexed to observe a strange air of listening and expectancy which had come upon her, — he yet let his spirits rise to their Alleghany height, and kept them at that summit; till at last, up they went to the fathom of the soaring eagle, screaming in his joy at the arrival of Bob Toner, with his fiddle. O jolly Bob! O slim young man, with chubby, ugly, ruddy face that laughed all over, and immense shock of red hair, at which the girls warmed their hands in fun, but lit their hearts in earnest — and had he been a Mormon, would n't he have been in town! For all the young women round about were dead in love with Bob, and half Bladensburgh and all the county far and near were his conquest, only he was too wise and good to take it. Soul-warming, heart-enticing Bob, with fly-away coat, and trousers trimly set upon his killing legs, and waistcoat like the plumage of a bird of Paradise,

and necktie made for murder! Bob entering, with derisive, doleful screech from fiddle of "Maryland, my Maryland," and instantly the whole house in a yell of laughter, and everybody running, and Bob twenty deep in girls and women, with children clinging to his legs, and pounding him like fun for sheer jollity, and men crowding about holding their jovial sides, and old Elkanah looming and bellowing above all, and hey! for a dance this very minute, to some blithe old tune of Liberty and Union!

Into it they go, while the thunder of Sherman's guns, all unknown to them, roars victory over the quaking hearts of rebels in captured Savannah, and the light of liberty and empire that shall not die pours from the breaking clouds, — into it they go to the tune of Yankee Doodle. Staunch Bob! Liberty and Union-loving Bob! They, the neither-hearted, who keep a rebel flag and a Union flag to hang out as either army comes, must this night kindle to their country, and dance to the grand old lilt, inwoven deep with jubilance, rantankerous defiance, proud Revolutionary fire, historic graves of grandsires, and the great name of Washington! Reviving Bob! Inspiring Bob! They, the true sons and daughters of Maryland, steadfast through doubt and loss, shall feel the merry music pour sunshine and fragrance around their hearts, as they

beat the floor with flying feet and souls aglow! O kindly, genial Bob! dancing like mad himself, and making one break and discord in the melody as he pats with the fiddle the back of old black Daniel bringing in the tray, and deftly resumes again, the excited dancers never noticing the break but footing it like angels, while Daniel thinks of the lost daughter, sold in slavery, that makes him wake in dreams in the dead nights, but soon shall meet him, free! O rousing Bob! fiddle like a fiery wind! fiddle till the pulses lose their beat in music! till the windows clash and rattle in their frames, and the floor resounds with regular dull thunder! till the feet dizzy, and the arms toss recklessly, and coat-tails, skirts, and ribbons fluttering fly and whirl, and the red dancers dance delirious! till the bright flags and tattered war-flag quiver on the wall! till all the odorous ground-pine garlands shake, and the immortal dark-green holly trembles! And Elkanah, standing solitary and removed, with fond heart swelling, and the big tears coursing down his cheeks, booms to himself amidst the noise, "Oh, that my son George would only come home, that I might dance again!"

Suddenly amidst the long-continued activity and din, down goes the music. At once all stop in tumult, then a ringing cheer, and the throng commingle joyously, wiping their heated faces,

with universal laughter and multitudinous clamor of merry voices. And then the clink of glasses, and all in fresh commotion streaming away to the lower apartment, where Daniel Snow presides over a mighty bowl of prime old apple-toddy, and punch and wine, and Bob Toner gives the ringing toast: "Our hosts, our friends, sweethearts and wives, the soldiers and the sailors, and America, our country, forever!" Hip, hip! hurrah! Three stunning cheers!

The sparkling and swirling tides of revelry were beginning to flow back upon the deserted rooms, when Emily suddenly appeared, in lovely agitation, her hand upraised, and hurrying light and color in her eyes and on her cheeks and parted lips.

"Oh, quick!" she said, "come quick, and see the prettiest sight you ever saw! Hish! Come softly."

Those who happened to be there — a few of the guests, Mrs. Dyzer, Tom and Fanny, Faulkner and John — followed her on tiptoe across the passage, into the chamber we have so often called the fire-lit room. The door of the adjoining apartment was half open, and, obeying her hushing hand, they all stole quietly up and peeped in. There, in the full illumination of the tapers and the firelight, sitting in a large oak chair near the centre of the room, was the gray

carpenter, crowded all around and over with a murmurous buzz of children. Girls and boys, thickly clustering, dense around his knees, perched upon his lap, close to his sides, mounted upon the arms of his chair, climbing over the back, peering around the edges, twittering, chirping, laughing, humming, prattling all together. He sat quietly, rosily smiling, deep in children. They fluttered around him like birds, they bloomed around him like flowers, they wreathed around him like vines, they swarmed around him like bees. Close to his breast he held the little lame girl, Lilian. The tender light of heaven was on them all.

The watching group stood breathlessly, gazing with open mouths and eyes upon the lovely picture. No heart but was stirred. Emily had stolen softly to her husband's side, silent, brooding upon the scene with parted lips, her face rapt and yearning, her white dress divinely tremulous, and lifting and falling with the tremor of her limbs and the palpitation of her bosom. John gazed, with clenched, drooping hands and bent head, his countenance surcharged with tender and melancholy gloom.

"O my husband!" he heard his wife fervently murmur, "see how fondly he holds our little lame girl! See the dear children gathered all around him! Oh, lovely, lovely sight! 'Suf-

fer little children to come unto Me,' — it makes me think of that, — 'for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Oh, my divine Redeemer! Oh, my Friend, my Saviour!"

He gazed in silence for a moment, then, filled with strong emotion, he slowly and softly moved away, and paused in shadow with bent head, in the corner near the window which held the harp. A slight movement passed through the group, and, without speaking, they stole on tiptoe from the room. Emily, still looking backward on the beauteous spectacle, retreated last. John remained in the shadow, brooding and alone.

There was a flying step, a quick rustle near him, and Emily, pale and agitated, was close against him, by his side.

"John, John! Oh, my husband, save me!" she wildly whispered. "I love you only, my darling. Save me — save me from my danger — save me from myself! Don't let me wander from you. I will tell you all. You do not know — but I will tell you — oh, help me in my peril! And you are sometimes so indifferent — and seem so hard and cold — and then life drags heavily with me. Oh, my love, be true and tender to me — my love, my husband!"

The stern and reticent man quivered with controlled emotion.

"I try to be, Emily," he faltered, after a pause. "That, I always try to be."

"Save me, John!" she hurriedly implored, with springing tears. "My only love, do not be cold to me — do not let me wander from you! That good old man — that stranger — oh, I cannot tell you now — but three times to-night he has brought up my heart's best feelings — he has recalled me to my best self — to my dear love for you, my darling — to my dead baby — to our little living one, my own husband! And when I saw him there with the dear children, and our poor baby nestling in his breast — Oh, John, love me, and take me back, close, close to you, my own husband, my first, my only love, my love forever! Save me — save me from myself, and never let me wander from you, in life or death — never let me wander any more."

Silently he threw his powerful arm around her, and drew her to his breast. With all her strength she clung to him. His eyes were blind with dropping tears, but he felt her soft, warm bosom throbbing against his heart, and his veins thrilled through with light and sweetness. Gathering her closelier to him, he bent his face to hers. His lips were wetted with her sacred tears; diffused with sad and gentle ecstasy throughout his sense, he felt the milk and cinnamon breath of his beloved, his wife, his own; and with the long and passionate holy kiss of wedded souls, love, fortressed against doubt or temptation, was reborn.

V.

They were gone, and the carpenter had left his swarm of children to their games, and now stood in the hallowed room. For the moment, he was quite alone. The guests, at the proposal of some stirring toast, had again all trooped away to the other side of the house, and were dense and joyous around the punch-table. The hour was wearing on to nine. The supper was to be at ten.

As the gray man stood near the side-door, with a dreamy air of listening, the company began to drop in again by twos and threes. Presently, among them appeared the stately form of Elkanah. After him came his wife, flushed and palpitating, yet struggling to keep calm. She drew near the carpenter and sat down. From the distant rooms the jollity rang loud.

"You are happy," said the carpenter, calmly smiling, to his glowing and beaming host, who had advanced towards him, softly laughing, and rubbing his hospitable hands.

"Ay, am I!" responded the old man, with a burst of glee. "Happy this night am I!"

"I complete your joy," said the carpenter with composure. "Elkanah Dyzer, I bring you a Christmas gift. Your son George is coming here to-night, alive and well."

The old man reeled towards him one step, with paling visage. Mrs. Dyzer sprang up, laughing furiously, and clapping her hands.

"He told me!" she cried. "He told me my fortune! Better than yours, my Elkanah! — better than yours! My George is coming — coming home to his mother — coming, coming home!"

"He was wounded and taken prisoner at Fredericksburg," resumed the carpenter, while they all breathlessly listened, some hushing the guests as they came in. "There he lost his left arm. He was kept in the rebel prison at Salisbury. He escaped at last, and got to Washington, helped on his way by a faithful negro, who stuck by him to the last, and is now a soldier in one of the black regiments. He was very ill. I nursed him in the hospital."

With a gasp of passionate love and gratitude, Elkanah reeled forward another step, outstretching his mighty arm with open hand to the carpenter. For some reason the latter did not respond to the proffered clasp. He remained in his attitude of supreme composure, repellant, and serenely sweet.

"O my God — my boy George!" exclaimed the old man, tottering back, and dashing his hands to his forehead. "My George — my George! Where is he?" he suddenly cried

with an electrifying burst, and face aflame — "Where is that nigger? Bring me that nigger who saved my son — bring him here, that I may give him my hand, my heart, my all — that I may enrich him — that I may load him down till his back cracks with benefits! Bring him here — bring me that black American, whiter than God's own snow against the white man's treason to Democracy — bring him here, that I may give him — Oh, my boy, my George; my saved and ransomed George; my son, my son! Where is he? speak!" he gasped — "where is he now?"

"I hear a step upon the path," said the calm carpenter. "There is a foot upon the sill. Enter!" he cried aloud, and with his hand he struck the door.

It flew open. With a spring a young man bounded in, wan, white under his tan, lit with excitement, his soldier's overcoat falling from his shoulders, his manly figure clad in faded army-blue, his armless sleeve dangling beside him. With a cry, he dashed off his cap, his foot beat a loud *appel* upon the floor — and "Mother! Father!" he shouted, leaping to their arms.

Up went the stormy cheer that shook the holly, and to and fro the surge, like ocean in his strength, and pouring in from every room the

hurrying stream of men and women in tumultuous commotion, and again and again the cheers that woke the dead rafters, rebellowing from the hearts of Maryland! And still as death amidst that roar of emotion, George, with his one arm tight around his mother, his stump clinging to his father's side, their arms girded fast around him, their heads all bowed in silent weeping; John and Emily, white and tremulous, crowding near him; Tom and Fanny crying in each other's arms close by; Faulkner, pale as marble, near the door, upholding little Lilian that she might see; and all around the mad and furious throng, swaying, and prancing, and mingling, and cheering as if their hearts would break; till at last, George detached himself, with showering kisses on mother, father, brothers, sisters, and turned electric, glowing like fire, and at once the roar went down in a tempest of greetings, frantic kisses from the women, merciless hand-shaking from the men, and "How are ye, George?" and "God bless ye, George!" and "Friend of yours, George!" and "You 've waxed the rebels, George!" and "Bully for you, George!" and universal hullabaloo and thundering laughter, and at last a lull.

"Ha, ha!" laughed George, still darted at by an occasional woman for a smacking kiss, and patted on the back by red-hot men; "com-

ing home 's worse than a battle! By the Lord Harry! but you 've made my arm ache, boys and girls! President's levee 's nothing to it."

"His arm!" pealed Elkanah, swelling aloft, with the tears still in his eyes, and proudly smiling. "His arm, O friends and neighbors! But not the one he 's given to his country. See, see!" he cried, lifting the half-empty sleeve of his son. "Look at this splendid trophy of my boy, haughtier than the blazon of conquerors and kings! The arm he gave to his country! O my dear son!" — he passionately embraced him. "Soldier of Democracy! bulwark of freemen! saviour of slaves! While such as you are left, the republic never can go down!"

He said it grandly, in a voice like the rich, bass shudder of organs, and a deep murmur, born from the sorcery of eloquence, pulsed responsive through the throng. The old wife, with her silk apron to her face, stood, leaning on the breast of the carpenter, gently weeping.

Suddenly, as the joyous commotion began again, she detached herself, and, with one more fervent kiss for George, flew away to the kitchen. Supper at ten, and everything of the best; but a mother's swelling heart must have something special for George.

George himself, somehow, looked curiously uneasy, and if any one among the excited gather-

ing had been cool enough to observe, he might have seen him glancing anxiously and often towards the serene carpenter.

The latter still stood near the door, unmoved amidst the din.

"And you," said Elkanah, approaching him with big and aching heart, and almost weeping at his lofty and reserved demeanor, — "you, who have come here, like our household fancy, old and gray, and been our light and blessing, and brought us back our son, like Lazarus from the dead, why do you stay outside the old man's heart, that loves you almost to breaking, amidst all his joy, — that loves you better than the old wife, or the boys, or anything on earth now? Is it because of the gold? To the ditches with it! I 'll scatter it on the highways before I 'll lose you. Pray, don't be angered with the foolish, wicked old man, that never knew, till you made him feel it, that love was better than money, or anything beside! Oh, take me into you! I never knew what it was to have a real friend before. The world will be cold to me when you are gone. Heaven won't be sweet without you, old youth, so old, so young, so good, so dear! See! I am foolish with my feeling for you! My heart is sweet and soft, because of you, for every living thing! I could n't shoot a bird now, for the lovingness that 's in me. I

could n't spade a worm out in my fields. No, no; I could n't harm a fly, my old heart 's so soft and tender."

"Is it?" rejoined the strange, gray man, in a voice like ominous low thunder. "Then enter!"

With his hand he struck the door. It opened with a shock that also closed it, and, as if shot in, a figure stood upon the floor. Trembling, drooping; with bowed head; a dark slouched hat, beneath which the face showed, lean, sharp, colorless, as if cut from white paper; a form attenuate, clad in dark civilian's clothes; the arms piteously, helplessly rising, falling; imploring, despairing. The old man staggered back, gazed, glared, reeled forward one pace, swayed on his feet, lifted his clenched hands and dashed them down in air with a terrific yell; then stood, collected, livid, dumb. It was his rebel son.

A stony silence smote the room. Suddenly, without warning, a black surge had swept in upon the general joy. All stood bewildered, motionless. Only George hurriedly whispered to Tom that mother did not know that Rupert was coming, and for God's sake run and keep her back, for there was going to be a scene. The young man flew.

In the frightful hush, some neighbors, who

knew Rupert, softly advanced with sickly smiles on their white faces, and timorous glances, and entered the space between him and the old man, as if to greet him.

"Back!" thundered Elkanah, outstretching his terrible arm. "I am master here. Let none approach him."

They fell away in terror. Some actually turned their backs and fled. The space between the father and the son was vacant.

It was too late or futile. Tom was down in agony on his knees. The mother was coming, running, between an opening lane in the throng, with a fearful cry as she saw her boy. White as ashes she came, with frantic speed, but, as if some baleful magic guarded the approach, no sooner had she reached her husband, than she stopped, flung up her arms, reeled over stiff in swoon, and would have fallen like stone upon the floor, but that the carpenter strode to her side, and caught her as she fell. A dozen arms took her from him, and carried her away.

"That is well," said the dreadful old man in a hollow voice. "We want no women here."

Livid, implacable, with pent-house shags of brows lowering over eyes of blue-hot steel, with teeth set hard, and puckered visage, and front of towering brawn, he stood confronting the wretched being before him.

"I feel as if the devil had suddenly brought me in a cup of tea," he said presently, in sardonic, griding tones, like the harsh clang of distant falling brass.

The hapless object on whom these grotesque words fell, feebly lifted his arms once, and let them sink again; then, as one resigning hope, drooped his head so low that his hat fell off, draggling his black, sweat-bedabbled hair over his shrunken visage, white as leprosy.

George, pale to blueness underneath his swarth, cast a hurried, beseeching glance at the carpenter, as depending on him to make the intercession. The carpenter, moveless, rosy, unshaken, remained mute, in utter composure, with his eyes fixed on the old man. Unable to longer keep silent, George turned to his father.

"Father," he said, in abrupt, trembling tones, "for my sake, for all our sakes, forgive Rupert. Don't be cruel — don't be unnatural. He has suffered much. He was misguided — deceived; he has entirely repented. Forgive him, I beg you. We were sick together in the hospital, and he is sick and weak still. Our good friend here nursed us both, like our own mother. We never can repay him for all his tender kindness. It was his plan to bring us here to-night. Father, I beseech you, forgive my poor brother."

It was all that George could say. Feeble,

despite its earnestness, it fell from the old man like a flattened bullet from the side of an iron-clad. Emily tried to come foward to add her pleading, but John held her back, knowing his father well, fully realizing the situation, and convinced that words were useless. Every one else remained in sickening expectancy.

"How comes he here?" said Elkanah, sternly pointing his finger at the cowering shape before him. "He is a rebel — why is he not also a prisoner?"

"He has been released," said George.

"By whom?" came the savage interrogation.

"By the man of all our hearts," cried George, with sudden glow. "By the man with millions of haters, who himself calls no man enemy."

"Abraham Lincoln," said the carpenter.

A profound murmur pulsed through the room.

"Yes," cried George, with gathering confidence, "by our President. This good friend here went to see him, and laid the case before him. He told him of our service to the country; he told him how Rupert had been led away; he told him of you, father, and all your devotion; of mother grieving for her lost boy, — of all; and the President gave the order for Rupert's release at once, and we brought him here."

A faint flush crept upon the old man's contracted face, and, in a gesture of respect, he

lowered his head to his up-carried hand. Then, with a powerful shudder, as when some mighty bull shakes the flies from his hide, he became erect, hard, and still.

"I utter nothing against Abraham Lincoln," he said, in low, reverberating tones. "He is my President. God bless him in his living, and in his dying, God bless him!"

In the solemn, almost tender silence which ensued, the outcast gathered courage.

"Father," he faltered, in a weak, husky voice, "forgive me! I do not ask you to receive me back again, but only forgive me, and bless me, and let me go my lonely way comforted. I was foolish — I was young" —

"You were not a boy," interrupted the harsh old man. "You are twenty-eight years old. You are not a child — you are a man."

"I know it, father," he huskily faltered; "but I was young in feeling. You know you used to chide me for making life so unreal — for my romantic way of looking at everything. It was in that way I looked at the rebellion. It seemed to me so right, so grand. It came to me in my folly like a great cause. Father, I have learned differently from bitter experience. I am wiser. Things look very different to me now."

"I should think they might," rejoined the old man in a heart-quaking roar. "Three hundred

thousand graves stud the land. Your work, and the work of monsters like you! Weeping and mourning in every household. Widows, orphans, childless fathers everywhere. The country in convulsion, and tottering on the brink of ruin. The land's best and bravest, horribly shattered and mangled, hobbling about on crutches, or buried in bloody trenches. I should think things might look different! Sir, I am not your father, but your judge. You are a murderer!"

The miserable creature covered his face with his hands. Hope died within him, and every breaking heart within the room, stricken to marble, and almost ceasing to beat in the iron silence, owned to itself that his case was hopeless.

"Look at that flag!" pealed the old man, falling into a posture of formidable antique dignity, with his masterful arm stretched towards the wall. "It is the flag of mankind! To that, you and your crew of vile liberticides are traitors. What have you fought for? That the dandy might spit in the mechanic's face! That the lord might insult the farmer! That the necks of the many might wear the yokes of the few! Some monarchy — some new, mongrel feudal hell on our Republican soil! That was your cause. A fine glittering house, laid on sodden whites and brutified blacks, squashed out of their manhood. Up aloft, your pirates' murder-cloth,

whose every flutter threw a pall upon some innocent household — and down below, in the putrid cellarage, our rotting prisoners, our dead and mangled braves. A fine, fine palace for my lord, the king! For this you have fought long. And now, success assured, you desert your work and come here, and ask forgiveness! Oh, impudence without a name!"

Convulsed with fury, he paused, grinding his teeth hard. George, half dead with horror, sank on his knees, with his arm across a chair, his head flung down upon it, his empty sleeve dangling beside him.

"I pass by" — the horrible voice, like sounding bronze, resumed, — "I pass by the misery, the shame, the desolation you have left upon us here for years. I pass" —

"Father," said Rupert, lifting his head, with forlorn dignity, — "one word. I am too weak and ill to speak. Let me only say that my error and my crime came from my sense of duty; and, bad as my cause has proved to be, I joined it in all honor, and carried myself like a man and a soldier."

"What was your service?" champed the old man. "Infantry? Cavalry? Speak, you devil!"

"Artillery," gasped Rupert.

"Hah!" outburst his father, with a tremendous explosion, "I have seen your work. Twice have

I been to battle-fields. I saw the black and bursted bodies, torn and swollen, in the grisly hollows of Bull Run! I saw the corpses of my murdered countrymen, rent with shrapnel and shell, when I went groping for your brother, with eyes stung with dreadful tears, on the bloody terraces of Fredericksburg! What arm restrains me that I smite not the soul from your carcass! Go!" he thundered, with a mighty sweep of his arm, and eyes like blue, fierce fire. "Hence, or I squelch you like a snake, beneath my feet! The curses of the living, the murrain of the dead, blight you! You man without a country, man without a flag, go, skulk the earth like Cain! Back with you! — tread the roads worn by the flayed and bloody feet of our heroes. The mounds heave at you as you pass, and vomit forth their ashes and their bones upon you! The skeletons from which dropped the black flesh, dense with vermin, in the winter misery, the summer horror, of Andersonville and Belle-isle, may they haunt your dreams! Off! — son without a father, man without a land — off with you forever!"

Bitterly weeping, Rupert fell away to the door. There was a slight and hushed commotion in the despairing room. Women, who had silently sunk in dead swoon, were being noiselessly removed. Then all was still again, and for a moment there was a dread syncope and pause.

The carpenter advanced with solemn and stately tread, composed and calm, but dilated to his fullest manly majesty, and, from brow to foot, he seemed all clothed with an august and strong illumination. Weakened by the recoil of his fury, and bracing himself with violence to meet the one he felt to be his true antagonist; looming in virile brawn, with massive, corrugated lion-face, and locked jaws, and eyes like orbs of ferocious azure glow; hard, savage, aroused, redoubtable as an embattled tower, the old man confronted him. Both were still. No words could paint the Titan sculpture of that moment. All hearkened for the first immense crash of the expected duel. All waited, with eyes strained in pain, for the gray stranger to speak; but his lips were firm, and, to the general surprise, he only, in utter silence, extended slowly his left arm.

Every one turned. They were leading in Mrs. Dyzer, and she was near. The extended arm received her, and those that led her retired. Silently the carpenter sustained her short and tottering step, till she paused near her husband. She stood, very quiet. Not a line of her dark dress quivered; her wealth of unbound hair, streaked with reverent silver, streamed upon her shoulders; her face was gray and dead; her lifted eyes were like stone; her raised hands were clasped together; only her ashen lips cease-

lessly moved in speechless imploring. In the long, soundless pause, it seemed as if heaven and earth were still.

"His mother!" said the carpenter.

It was as if a shock struck the room. The brief speech had the effect of a thunderclap, and in a roaring inward whir and overthrow, which never reached the outward silence, every heart was bathed as with bright fire. Oh, how he uttered those words! They were electrifying. The stern energy, the melting tenderness, the divine depth of significance, the heart-shaking associations that he threw into them, would have reached a soul though housed in granite. Elkanah felt them to the very marrow of his bones. In one instant, his vigor of pride and fury was dissolved, and he was cold.

Slowly, without moving from his dreadful posture — slowly, while the pallid assemblage gazed with dry, hot eyes — the old man turned his head, as if the weight of all the world hung to it, till at last it became fixed, and his appalling gaze rested upon the ghastly countenance beneath his own. She never spoke, — speech was impossible; it had been like the effort of one bursting from death, for her to merely reach his side; but without ceasing, her hueless lips moved in an agony of mute beseeching. Not a breath was heard; not an eyelash quivered; the tapers burned un-

wavering; the shadows slept upon the floor; no leaf of the dense, branchy roof of holly trembled. The old husband, the old wife of many years, stood movelessly, their eyes locked to each other's faces with a fixed regard. But in his soul, like the rush of remembrance to the drowning, was a hurrying stream of memories and images: the fond old days, the sweet, glad times of marriage, the cradle by the fire-lit hearth, the infant's dimpled hand caressing the white nursing bosom, the young mother's face thrilling with the divine joy of maternity, the baby's shoe, the prattle, the tiny dresses, the light, the comfort, the magic sights and sounds of home. All the weak, weak things, that have power to shake the hearts of the mighty, came to him as he stood gazing at her. The moment was sublime.

"She pleads for her first-born," said the carpenter, in low, clear tones, like soundless light upon the silence, and awful in the grandeur of their pathos.

The old man's visage gradually swayed away, and his large eyes, from which the flame had gone in glisten, rested upon the calm, lit face of the illuminated man before him. Erect, bent forward, he stood like a leaning column, intent upon the carpenter.

In the silence, George, mad, wild, unknowing what was happening, suddenly sprang up, though

without noise, and in the pallid swarth of his fierce face, his lips curved open for some fiery utterance. A commanding gesture from the other, striking him mute upon the instant, also summoned him to his side. He came, with measured, clinging steps that dully struck the floor, and paused with down-bent head beside his summoner. Without haste, the latter took his empty sleeve by the extremity, and lifted it up before the old man's eyes.

"This pleads for him," he said solemnly.

For a moment, he upheld the brave, pathetic sleeve, then let it fall. A strange and indeterminate stir went through the assembly, and, as if from the arrival of a new spirit among them, there was a change.

Elkanah Dyzer was weeping!

He had not altered his attitude nor posture; he still leaned forward, columnar; but his head was bent, and the big drops, as from the eyes of some stricken deer, fell visibly to the floor. At once relief came to the pent bosoms of the throng, and from women's eyes, and from men's eyes unused to tears, the moisture began to flow.

"Shall I add my pleading?" said the carpenter, in a gentle, yet sovereign voice. "No! Not one word of weaker supplication from my lips. 'T is God Himself implores you in this

mother's heart and bosom yearning for her child — this arm the soldier gave to his country, not to destroy, but to restore."

A change had come upon him. The rosy color had died from his face in a clear splendor, and his form, regnant and masculine, was clothed with inspiration, as with a dazzling aureole.

"I have dreamed a dream of my country," he said slowly. "I saw her, angel of the cradle, mother of all that are, in her strength of loving beneficence to her many children, and to every member of the race of man. Out of her womb issued the armed soldier, champion of her Democracy, savior of earth's slaves. Not to rend my land in twain. No; but to bind anew, in love, her warring citizens, to unite the broken ties of kindred, to give the brother to his earliest mates, to reconcile the father to the son, to restore the mother to her child."

The old wife lay clinging to her husband's breast, and he, through all his obstinate height, was shaken and convulsed like one in some mute frenzy.

"Come hither, Rupert, unto me," said the carpenter. "Come hither, my own dear boy!"

The wretched being, who stood weeping bitterly, leaning against the wall, feebly staggered to his side. The staunch old savior threw his strong right arm around him, and with the other encircled the weeping George.

"I nursed them both together in the hospital," he resumed, in a gentler strain. "Their cots were side by side. I sat between them. When father and mother forsake them, I will not cast them out. Equally they are mine. My life is in them. Elkanah Dyzer, receive thy sons! Thou, whom I learned to love before I knew thee, and whose faults of nature are from stocks of virtue, receive from me this Christmas gift, more than all the riches of the world. Take back these loving brothers, two henceforth in one. Thou canst not refuse me."

The old man flung up his arms, tense, stiff, with a mighty struggle; his face, shrunken, colorless, seemed to blacken; the old wife clung madly to his breast.

"Lost — lost!" he gasped; "dead — dead, forever."

There was a moment's pause, and the sublimely tender voice, full-fraught with the deep music of eighteen centuries, sounded upon the silence.

"For this, thy son, that was dead, is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

A rending struggle shook the old man's frame; then, as one exhausted, his upstretched arms fell laxly down — down upon the neck of his rebel son. One instant only, they lay there flaccidly; the next, they gathered the first-born to his breast, and frantically he covered the pal-

lid, weeping face with moaning kisses and with tears. Yet, even as they all clung to him, his wife, his sons and daughters, and the voices of their love and weeping mingled with the sobbing of the room, he tore himself away, as if with the last effort of his waning strength, to fling himself upon the breast of the carpenter. Tenderly, and with a mighty clasp, the loving heart received him, and, with their heads bowed upon each other's shoulders, the two old men stood in the reverent silence, locked in each other's arms.

"Love!" said the gray redeemer, lifting his clear face, bright with deathless smiling, and wet with the sweet waters of immortal tears, "love — love! That includes all. There is nothing in the world but that — nothing in all the world. Better than all is love. Love is better than all."

The family, the guests, were thronging around him, yet not to listen or to gaze, but with his noble presence, his deep words in every heart, to unloose near him in silence, pierced with sobbing, their passion of affection for each other. Each life that moment lived in an ecstasy of charity. Friends grasped each other by the hand. Neighbors forgot their petty feuds, their lurking enmities, and met in tremulous greeting. The secret rebel struck hands with the tepid

loyal, and both rose glowing into love of country. The daughter's arms were round the father's neck. The son was clinging to his mother. Sisters were sobbing in their brothers' embrace, and guileless lovers, unashamed, clasped each other in crying joy. Bright in holy shadow bloomed the graves of darlings. Deep in the spirit air the fadeless fields unrolled, the shining cities rose, the bells of heaven were ringing sweet and low. Till at last, upon the murmuring hush, the sacred tremor, the rapt and happy sorrow, the exaltation and the vision, came the innocent silver laughter of a little child.

It was the sweet return of Earth. In the immediate stir, the weeping grew louder, mixed with trembling, laughing voices; the figures began to mingle; the sound of feet awoke the floor; remark and response brake forth; a handkerchief was waved; another and another, and suddenly the air was full of snowy flags, all flying, flying, flying; the faces began to toss and light and glow; the multitudinous voices arose upgathering like the sound of many waters; and one weak voice among them broke into a cheer, the signal for another from beyond; there was a whir swelling into a roar of commotion; and at once, with handkerchiefs all madly waving, figures swaying, women leaping, orbic mouths and

faces flaming, out burst the long-pent hurricane in frantic cheers. Cheers that jarred the rooms and clashed the windows; made the flags quiver on the wall, and the dense holly shower its scarlet berries, and drop its leaves; cheers that made Elkanah totter back, and fall in aching rapture on his Rupert's neck, with wife and sons and daughters bunched tight about with interwoven arms — a solid grove of family affection tied moveless in the tornado-whirl around them. Cheers dizzying, redoubling, hoarsening into fury from determined lungs; the leaves down-flittering, specks of white from the ceiling dropping, the lights of the patriot-tapers wavering, the phrenetic flames of the hearth uproaring in the gale of gowns, the elements let loose, the joyous tornado rising into the delirious simoom for Rupert's welcome home! And, hark! amidst the tremendous incommunicable tumult, the wild bald-eagle scream of Bob Toner's fiddle! And they dance — who hears the tune? — it might have been a dirge! — they dance like drunken seraphim — they dance and cheer — they stop the cheer to dance the harder — the family-group is moving away, all locked together, — they dance, moving with it, in furious glad music, with sobs, with cries, with laughter — they prance, they caper, they plunge, they whirl, like mænads, like bacchantes, raving, raging — till,

at last, all stream away together, leaping, bounding, through the doorway, across the passage into the apartments beyond, where in lessening tumult the dance goes on, and the room is left in solitude.

There is a limping step upon the stairs, and in tottles little pygmy Lilian, blue-dressed and yellow-curled, dragging a big shawl, which she proceeds to endeavor to wrap around her. Presently enters old giant Elkanah, hurried, pale, trembling, with a strange look and light upon his face, and stares, craned over with weak astonishment, upon the doings of his grandchild.

"God bless me! little one!" he stammers; "what are you up to with that shawl? Where 's my best friend gone to?"

"Grandpa," replies the mite gravely, wrapping herself up with intense determination, "what you said to uncle Rupert was horrid gollawash. And you told him to Go! And I went upstairs to get this shawl. And I had an *awful* hunt — *awful*. And then I found it. And I 'm going along, too, with my dear uncle Rupert — this very minute."

"No, darling," replied the old man tenderly, forgetting to laugh, in his emotion, "no, uncle Rupert is not going away — never. He 's going to live with us always. But where 's Mr. Carpenter?"

"My goodness, grandpa!" said the little midget, ceasing to enwrap herself. "Not going! Then I'll stay my own self. But there 's been an awful change of front somewhere!"

"Lily, dear," said the old man weakly, bending down to her, "can't you tell me where uncle Peter's old Good Man has gone to? He 's not in the rooms, for I've looked."

"Ain't he, grandpa? Then I guess he 's gone back to heaven this very night," she answered.

"O my friend!" sighed the old man, rising to his feet with a burst of controlled and tender grief. "My strange, best benefactor, could I but just once see you again! O my heart, my heart! so drained of all its blood, so full of light, so full of sorrow and gratitude, so full of gentleness and love! Could I but once look on your dear face — could I but once see you, even at a distance, again."

"Grandpa," said the small, silver voice, "wrap me up well in this shawl, for it 's cold, and take me out, for maybe, you know, he 's outside the door."

The old man feebly started, and, stooping, wrapped her in the shawl; and taking her up on his breast, where she affectionately nestled, went out into the winter darkness, grand and cold, and lit by many stars.

For a moment, coming from the lighted room, they saw nothing in the vast, dim obscurity. Behind them, the noise of the revelers was loud, muffled in the cloak of the frigid outer silence. Presently, the dark swales of the farm became apparent, with clumps of vague bushes, and amorphous shapes of trees, rising here and there. Their eyes sought the path, which led away from the door, and curved over a sort of mound or hillock against the east, to bend again to the distant road. And there they beheld him.

"Look, grandpa!" said little Lilian. "I see him there."

The moon was coming up, though still below the horizon, and half the heavens were lit with an immense pure radiance. He stood upon the mound, looking toward them, enlarged in aspect by the frozen air, a grave and manly figure, darkly defined against that great light arising on the world. They gazed on him with straining eyes. Within, the glad noises of the joy of earth rang merrily. Without, was the form of love undying, moveless in icy darkness against the peaceful and tender light of God. A moment, and they saw him raise his hand in benediction and farewell. The old man's eyes filled with tears — the little child nestled low upon his breast.

He was gone.

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